

Security pact eludes Arab states

CAIRO (AFP) — An Arab League committee has failed to agree on a security and cooperation pact aimed at preventing crises such as the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, officials said Wednesday. Objections were raised by Arab states to various points of the project, including the name of the pact, blocking a reconciliation formula, an Arab delegate told AFP. The permanent representatives of the 22 Arab League members took part in the committee meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday on the proposed pact at the organisation's headquarters in Cairo. Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Qatar and Tunisia raised the most reservations, the delegate said, asking not to be identified. The pact was approved in principle at the last Arab summit in Cairo in June, but the committee was aiming to finalise the initiative in time for a foreign ministers' meeting here on March 30.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
 جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الراي

Israel to release Jordanians — Ensour

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour on Wednesday told Parliament that all Jordanian prisoners in Israeli jails will be released in the next two days. Dr Ensour said that the remaining Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait are also expected to be released soon. Dr Ensour's was replying to Deputy Bassam Emoush, who voiced appreciation of the government's efforts that succeeded in securing the release of Jordanian prisoners from Kuwait jails and urged the government to pursue efforts for the release of the remaining detainees in Kuwait as well as Jordanian detainees in Israel. In Wednesday's session, the House, endorsed a new draft companies law. Some articles of the draft were approved earlier, and in Wednesday's session, the House endorsed the rest. The also referred a number of draft laws to the concerned committees.

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Israel approves Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement

King, in strongly worded message, urges reconsideration of decision

Peace process in danger — Palestinians

King's letter to Netanyahu says move will not serve any one, including Israelis, and cautions ties could suffer

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Israeli government approved construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem on Wednesday despite Palestinian and international fears the move could spark violence and sink the peace process.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced after a ministerial meeting that the government had given the green light to building the first 2,500 homes for Jews on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

In Gaza City, Palestinian officials immediately slammed the decision as a threat to the fragile Middle East peace process and warned of a potential violent backlash among Palestinians.

"The Israeli government today put the peace process in danger," said Nabil Abu Rdaina, a top aide to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

"President Arafat is very worried about security and stability as a result of this (decision). We will not stand with our hands tied towards this violation," said his spokesman Marwan Kanafani.

Mr. Netanyahu had wavered for weeks on whether to approve the plan to build 6,500 apartments for Jews in the city's eastern sector claimed by the Palestinians as a future capital.

A new conflict over Jerusalem could spark uncontrollable violence, said Ahmed Abdul Rahman, the secretary general of the Palestinian cabinet. "Jerusalem is a ball of fire and if this ball of fire explodes it will burn all other things," he said.

Israeli peace activists said they would appeal to the supreme court to try and block construction.

Wednesday's unanimous decision came after a three-hour meeting between Mr. Netanyahu and 12 of his 18 cabinet ministers.

In announcing the decision, cabinet secretary Danny Naveh said no starting date had been set for construction, but that he expected preparations to be completed in several days.

Mr. Naveh appealed to the Palestinians to show self-restraint and warned that Israeli security services were prepared for any protests. Israel's police and army deployed reinforcements in Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank to prevent protests.

An Israeli government decision concerning Jerusalem in September — the opening of a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel next to Muslim holy sites — set off three days of battles between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian police in which more than 80 people were killed.

At the time, peace talks were going nowhere, and the violence helped prod the Netanyahu government into speedier negotiations that were capped by last month's Hebron agreement.

This time, the Palestinians would have more to lose if they took to the streets and confronted the Israelis.

By March 7, Israel is to complete the first of three troop pullbacks in the West Bank as part of the Hebron deal.

Israel army radio said Mr. Netanyahu has warned Mr. Arafat the withdrawal could be delayed if there was violence over the Jabal Abu Ghneim project, which Israelis call Har Homa.

Mr. Arafat is also to meet with President Bill Clinton in Washington next week, and U.S. officials told the Palestinian leader he must

not encourage violence over the project.

"We do not want to see violence occur," Edward Abington, the U.S. consul general in Jerusalem, said Wednesday.

Mr. Abington also criticised Israel, saying it should not make unilateral decisions that complicate peacemaking.

Palestinians object to the project because it will be built on land seized in the 1967 war. They also fear it would cut off Arab sections of Jerusalem from the West Bank.

In Wednesday's decision, some 2,500 homes will be built in the first stage. The government also said it would build some 3,000 homes for Palestinians in Arab East Jerusalem.

Mr. Netanyahu said Israel was the "undisputed sovereign" in Jerusalem, but would not forget about the city's 160,000 Palestinian residents.

"The response should be guided by facts, not by emotion that is divorced from fact," Mr. Netanyahu told a news conference for Arab journalists convened in an attempt to damage control.

"The emotion that I want to introduce is the emotion of hope, of a common future and an appeal to common sense," Mr. Netanyahu said.

However, Israeli spokesmen for Jerusalem acknowledged that the government was not planning actually to build housing in Arab neighbourhoods — but only to develop the area for construction by paving roads and installing water and sewage lines.

The Israeli group Peace Now said the government's announcement concerning Palestinian housing was "blatant disinformation"

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Arabs, Europe condemn decision

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Arab states led a chorus of condemnation as the Israel government on Wednesday approved the construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

The European Union (EU) also expressed concern about the plan and formally asked Israel not to build a Jewish district in Arab East Jerusalem's Jabal Abu Ghneim. The Israelis call the project Har Homa.

An EU spokesman said a delegation of EU diplomats had warned Israel that proceeding with the plan would be "very detrimental to the whole political atmosphere between Israelis and Palestinians."

In Brussels, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo said: "The European Union has constantly condemned the policy (of settlement) as it is in conflict with U.N. Security Council resolutions and presents a threat to peace."

Syria, which has gone to war with Israel three times since the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, warned that building Har Homa would be a "declaration of war."

The plan "surpasses in its aggressiveness and negative consequences" the opening of a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel in Jerusalem which sparked clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in September, the official daily Al Thawra said.

State-run Tehran Radio called for Israel's expulsion from the United Nations over Har Homa saying the Jewish state was showing indifference to the will of the international community.

Arab states lobbied the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday in a bid to halt the Har Homa project.

The Arab League said it was "seriously concerned" about the move "and charged that the goal was to 'encircle the Arab part of Jerusalem with settlements'."

In London, a Foreign Office spokesman said "our position about settlement is well-known; it is illegal and an obstacle for peace."

British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind said that "for the Israelis to go ahead with these settlements would be retrograde, very unfortunate and counter-productive for the overall success of the peace process."

In Stockholm, Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen said in a statement that "plans to allow an expansion of Jewish settlements on occupied territory between Jerusalem and Bethlehem on the West Bank are ominous."

"The plans are, from the Swedish viewpoint, a serious obstruction to the positive continuation of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians," she said.

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein, in a strongly-worded message to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on Wednesday warned that the Israeli decision to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem was a serious blow to the Middle East peace process.

The King's message, which was delivered to Mr. Netanyahu by a special envoy, warned that the Israeli decision risked damaging Israeli-Jordanian relations.

"The King warned that the implementation of the Israeli decision was bound to create new facts on the ground whose negative effects will adversely influence the positive feelings that have been prevailing lately," Jordan Television said.

That was an implicit reference to Jordanian-Israeli ties which had warmed up after Israel and the Palestinians signed the Hebron agreement in January following the King's direct intervention.

Relations between the two countries, which signed a peace treaty in October 1994, had been cool after it became clear that Mr. Netanyahu, who took office in June 1996, was placing hurdles in the way of implementing the autonomy agreements his predecessors had signed with the Palestinians.

The Hebron accord of Jan. 15, 1997, cleared the hurdles and set the way of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the final status of the occupied territories. Subsequently, Jordanian-Israeli ties also warmed up.

In his message to Mr. Netanyahu, the King reiterated Jordan's stand, which was made clear to the Israeli premier during a visit to Amman on Sunday, that the Kingdom considers East Jerusalem an occupied Arab land, Jordan Television said.

As such, the Kingdom sees any unilateral change in the status of the city before reaching a final agreement with the Palestinian National Authority constitutes a serious danger to peace.



Jordan Television said.

The King called on Mr. Netanyahu to reconsider his decision to go ahead with the Jabal Abu Ghneim project and emphasised that the

Israeli plan does not serve the interests of the peoples of this region, including those of the Israeli people.

The Israeli decision would undermine the credibility of the whole peace process and trigger anger that will unleash violence and endanger the building of peace, said the King.

The King said it was unacceptable to see the peace process faltering and stressed that there was need for developing joint action along the path of comprehensive peace to which the peoples of this region aspire.

King Hussein had sent a similar message to the late Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin when Israel in 1995 decided to confiscate lands in Arab East Jerusalem and Rabin responded positively to the King's appeal and halted the move.

At the time the United States vetoed a United Nations Security Council Resolution against Israeli measures in Arab East Jerusalem.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who was reportedly expected to visit Tel Aviv on Saturday to attend

King, Arafat discuss moves

KING HUSSEIN and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Wednesday reviewed the adverse impact of the Israeli government's decision to build a settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim. In a telephone call, King Hussein and President Arafat said they consider the Israeli move as endangering the whole peace process. The two leaders discussed coordinating their stands on this issue in order to advance the peace process.

a ceremony in memory of Rabin, has cancelled the visit in what was seen as another message of strong protest against the Israeli plan to build on Jabal Abu Ghneim.

"The Crown Prince, who has clearly demonstrated his commitment to peace, will visit Israel only if such a visit will serve the cause of peace," an official source said Tuesday, confirming only that the Crown Prince had a long-standing invitation to attend the Tel Aviv ceremony but would not be going.

Meanwhile Jordan has launched intense diplomacy to come up with a united Arab stand to defend the peace process and Arab rights in East Jerusalem, Information Minister Marwan Muasher said.

The King, over the past three days, had been in touch with Arab and foreign heads of state pursuing this objective, the minister told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

In his contacts the King reiterated Jordan's principled stand towards Jerusalem, stressing that the final status of the Holy City be left for the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, said Dr. Muasher.

"Jordan has a clear and firm stand also with regard to Jewish settlements which it considers as an obstacle in the path of peace," said Dr. Muasher.

"Jordan rejects the settlement plans

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinians accuse Israeli soldiers of shooting, choking man to death

HIZMEH (AFP) — Palestinians here Wednesday accused Israeli agents of beating and choking to death a man who had come to the aid of a neighbour the soldiers were hitting during questioning.

"He died from the loss of blood and also from being choked," said Nasser Halui, a relative of Mohammad Halui, who died at a hospital in Jerusalem late Tuesday.

"They threw him on the ground and a soldier put his knee on his neck," Nasser Halui told AFP. "When I tried to help him he said 'don't come near' because he was afraid I would be shot."

Palestinian security services, meanwhile, denounced the killing. "The soldiers of this special unit were in civilian clothes and entered the home of a Palestinian without reason," a statement from the general security agency said in Gaza City.

The soldiers "provoked troubles and killed Mohammad Abu Halui, an innocent, 55-year-old retiree who had no political activities," the statement said.

An Israeli army spokesman claimed the soldiers came under a hail of stones thrown by local residents and opened fire because they felt their lives were in danger. He added that the soldiers then fired tear gas to disperse an

angry crowd that had gathered after the shooting.

The incident began when the soldiers disguised as Arabs tried to question Hamzeh Mubarak, 21, at his home. When the anguished, violent, neighbours tried to intervene.

Mr. Mubarak, his wife, Adir, and his uncle Ali Mubarak were injured in the ensuing violence and Mohammad Halui was killed.

"I don't know what the soldiers wanted from me," said Hamzeh Mubarak, with a broken arm and his head wrapped in bandages. "I have never been questioned by them or been in prison."

The Palestinian statement said the self-rule deals signed between Israel and the Palestinians "do not permit Israel to act in this way."

Local Administration Minister Saeb Erakat delivered an official protest to Israeli government secretary Danny Naveh and demanded an investigation into "the murder of an elderly man."

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai announced that an investigation into the shooting has been opened, according to Israel Radio.

Prior to the victim's funeral here Wednesday, children in a rocky field nearby arranged stones around blood stains and bullet cas-

ings from the previous night's violence.

An Israeli army jeep stood nearby on Wednesday as dozens of young men in checkered keffiyehs gathered outside Mohammad Halui's home. Their elders urged them to leave the area so as to prevent an angry outburst during the funeral.

"I hope, I think something will happen here because everybody is angry," said Nasser Halui, who had three close friends who were killed by Israeli soldiers in separate incidents.

"We are angry about these things we see everyday. The Palestinian people want peace but it is not coming," Mr. Halui said.

The village remained a closed military zone Wednesday, with entry barred to Israelis and Palestinians without authorisation.

Around 2,000 Palestinians gathered south of the West Bank town of Tulikarem on Wednesday to protest against Israeli plans to create large quarries in the region, police said.

The quarries are to be set up with the backing of Israeli investors on land seized from Palestinians.

The Palestinian National Authority helped the protest by laying on dozens of buses to ferry people to the site, police added.

Jordan denounces Israeli plan as illegal, violation of U.N. resolutions and danger to peace process

House calls for Arab summit to fight Judaisation of Jerusalem

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Wednesday strongly denounced Israel's plans to build a Jewish settlement in Arab Jerusalem as illegal, a violation of U.N. resolutions and a threat to the Middle East peace process. Parliament called for an Arab summit to discuss a united Arab front to counter the Israeli plans.

In separate statements, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and the Lower House of Parliament reiterated Jordan's total rejection of any unilateral move that would change the demographic or any other feature of Arab East Jerusalem before Israel and the Palestinians conclude their final status negotiations, in which the status of the Holy City is a key issue.

Mr. Kabariti, in a meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, secretary of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Executive Committee, reviewed the Jordanian-Palestinian stand vis-a-vis and the situation in Jerusalem, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

Both leaders condemned Israel's plans to build the so-called Har Homa settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem. Mr. Kabariti also met with Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour, who said after the meeting that the prime minister reaffirmed Jordan's condemnation of Israel's attempts to change the historic, demo-



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Wednesday receives senior Palestinian official Mahmoud Abbas

graphic and religious character of Jerusalem.

In a separate statement, the Lower House of Parliament said the Israeli government's settlement policy and its attempts to Judaise Jerusalem make it imperative to hold an urgent Arab summit on the dangers and to work to counter them.

The 80-member legislature also called for pressure "on the Arab and Muslim governments and friends so they'll stand up against the Israeli government."

"Jerusalem belongs to the occupied (in 1967) Palestinian territories and must be returned to Palestinian

two sides reviewed the outcome of His Majesty King Hussein's last meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as the latest developments in the peace process.

Mr. Kabariti said Jordan considers the settlements as illegal and an act of aggression on the Arab lands and a violation of the U.N. resolutions.

"Jerusalem constitutes the cornerstone in the peace process and any demographic or other changes before the end of the coming final status negotiations constitute a flagrant violation of the Oslo agreement and the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty, something which Jordan totally rejects and condemns," said Mr. Kabariti.

Noting the identity of Jordanian and Palestinian positions in this issue, Mr. Kabariti stressed Jordan's continued support for the Palestinian National Authority and international legitimacy.

Following the meeting Mr. Abbas told the press that the Jordanian and Palestinian stands were united in the face of the dangers posed to Jerusalem and Israel's settlement plans.

"The settlements in general and the planned settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim in particular are creating an explosive situation leading to serious consequences," said Mr. Abbas.



APPEAL FOR PEACE: Faisal Hussein, top Palestinian National Authority (PNA) official in Jerusalem, appeals for peace as he sits beneath a portrait of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin while on a visit to the Israeli Knesset (parliament) on Wednesday. Mr. Hussein called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to approve a controversial plan to build thousands of homes for Jews in Arab East Jerusalem to prevent an explosion of Palestinian violence. But the plan was approved later in the day (see page 1) (Reuters photo)

Minister warns sanctions could tear Sudan apart

KHARTOUM (AP) — A U.N. ban on flights abroad by Sudan's national carrier could tear apart Sudan, Africa's largest country, a Sudanese official was quoted as saying Wednesday.

The U.N. Security Council has warned Sudan that it may ban international flights by Sudan Airways if the country refuses to turn over three men wanted in a 1995 assassination attempt on Egypt's president.

But no decision has been taken, and China and Russia oppose tough measures against Sudan.

"Any kind of economic punishment is a direct threat to the unity, security and stability of Sudan," Mustafa Osman Ismail, a state minister in the Foreign Ministry, was quoted as saying Wednesday by the official Sudan news agency.

Last week, a report prepared for the Security Council warned that sanctions might make it difficult for Sudanese to seek medical treatment abroad and hurt agriculture. Planes used for domestic transport would be deprived of maintenance abroad, it said.

Mr. Ismail said the report should be enough to persuade council members not to impose the air ban.

Sudan has barely 3,200 kilometres of roads. River and rail transport are often interrupted by bad weather and fighting with southern rebels.

Sudan is already under diplomatic sanctions. In April, after the government failed to surrender the suspects, the council required U.N. members to reduce Sudan's diplomatic presence and restrict the movement of Sudanese diplomats.

Sudan says the three suspects are not on its territory.

Yemen to press bid to join GCC

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Yemen said on Tuesday it would press ahead with its bid to join its Gulf Arab neighbours in their 16-year-old alliance despite partial opposition to the move.

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, speaking to journalists who accompanied him here and to state-run Abu Dhabi Television, said Yemen wanted to become a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) because it is part of the region.

His remarks were conveyed to AFP by Yemeni Ambassador Abdullah Barakat, who said the UAE supported Sanaa's bid to join the GCC.

"Yemen is part of this region and its natural place is within the GCC. We will continue to ask to join the GCC," Mr. Saleh said.

Sanaa has repeatedly sought to become a GCC member, but some coun-

tries in the group are opposed to its membership.

Yemeni embassy sources said Kuwait was vehemently against Yemen's joining the oil-rich Gulf bloc after it accused Sanaa of supporting Iraq when its troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

GCC states created their political, defence and economic alliance in 1981, nearly nine months after the outbreak of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

They have said they wanted to integrate their similar economic systems and boost defence coordination but denied the bloc targeted other countries.

GCC states control nearly 45 per cent of the world's oil reserves and more than 17 per cent of the global gas resources. The per capita income of more than \$16,000 in some members far surpasses the income of less than \$300 in Yemen,

which lies at their doorstep.

"The (Yemeni) president stressed to the UAE leader that he will continue to ask for a GCC membership," Mr. Barakat said.

"As you know, Kuwait has reservations while Saudi Arabia has remained silent on the issue. The problem is that a decision of this kind (to admit new members) should be unanimous according to the GCC statute."

Asked whether the UAE president, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, responded positively to Mr. Saleh's proposal to join the GCC, the ambassador said: "Sheikh Zayed has always been positive with us. Yes he responded positively."

Mr. Barakat said Mr. Saleh, who flew to Sanaa after a visit of few hours, did not raise Yemen's border dispute with Saudi Arabia during his talks with

the 80-year-old UAE leader. "That problem is with Saudi Arabia not with the UAE. Everything is moving in the right direction with the Saudis," he said.

Mr. Barakat quoted Mr. Saleh as telling reporters that Yemen would not normalise ties with Israel before it reaches a comprehensive peace with Arabs.

"The president stressed Yemen's principled stand that we will establish relations with Israel only after it reaches a comprehensive peace with Arab countries and withdraws from all occupied Arab territories, including South Lebanon and the Syrian Golan Heights," Mr. Barakat said.

"He also affirmed that any Yemeni decision in this regard will be in line with a collective Arab agreement."

Iran nuclear facility close to completion

TEHRAN (AP) — A newspaper has reported that the Bushehr nuclear plant will shortly be connected to Iran's electricity grid, the first indication that the controversial facility was close to completion.

The Farsi-language Eteelaat daily quoted Esmail Tabadar, deputy governor of southern Bushehr province, as saying that the power plant would come on stream during a visit by President Hashemi Rafsanjani. No such visit has been announced, but Mr. Tabadar said it was "imminent."

The Bushehr plant is being completed mostly with Russian equipment and engineers in a \$1 billion deal with Moscow despite opposition by the United States. U.S. officials fear that Iran could use the technology to build nuclear weapons.

Iran has not announced when the facility will be completed.

But Eteelaat quoted Mr. Tabadar as saying that the nuclear facility would be hooked up to the 400-kilowatt Choghadak electricity network, which will bring it onto the national grid.

Earlier this month, officials in Ukraine said that Iran was shopping there for two \$50 million turbines for the Bushehr nuclear plant.

Turbosatom, the factory which would take the Iranian orders, supplied turbines for many Soviet nuclear plants, but since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union has moved much of its business elsewhere.

Five candidates run for Iran presidency

DUBAI (R) — Five candidates have thrown their hats into the ring for Iran's presidential election but the conservative speaker of parliament remains front-runner, analysts said on Wednesday.

Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati announced the date for the poll — May 23 — on Tuesday at a meeting with Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and provincial governors.

The poll, the seventh since Shi'ite Muslim clergyman led a 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the monarchy of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, is to elect a successor to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Mr. Rafsanjani, a pistachio farmer turned cleric and politician, is constitutionally barred from a third four-year term as president and is due to leave office on Aug. 3.

Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, conservative speaker of the 270-seat Majlis or parliament, is rated the favourite to succeed him.

"This is largely due to his wide public recognition. As speaker he often gets exposure in state media, most importantly television, so people know him," one Tehran-based analyst said.

Also, the largest groups of conservative clergy support him. One of his chief backers, Mohammad Javad Larijani, said earlier this month Mr. Nateq-Nouri was expected to usher in a programme of economic reform if he was elected.

Mr. Larijani, deputy chairman of the Majlis foreign relations committee, said at a London news conference Mr. Nateq-Nouri would invigo-

rate the economy, implement a tight monetary policy, discipline the banks and increase security of investment.

He would also encourage private entrepreneurs, make the government withdraw from financial and economic activities and cut the size of the government.

Others who have already declared their candidacy are: — Mohammad Mohammadi Reyschahi, a hardline conservative former intelligence (internal security) minister and leader of Iranian pilgrims to the annual pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia

— Mohammad Khatami, minister of culture and Islamic guidance from 1982 to 1992 who is backed by radical Islamist intellectuals.

— Said Reza Zavareie, a veteran conservative activist who is vice-chairman of the judiciary

— Heshmatollah Tabarzadi, editor of Payam-e Daneshju (student message), which was banned for five years last July for allegedly publishing slander. He is secretary-general of the National Union of Islamic Associations of University Students, which nominated him on Tuesday.

Mr. Rafsanjani's centrist backers have yet to name their candidate who, like all other contenders, must be approved by the 12-man supervisory body of clerics and lawyers.

People aged 15 and older in Iran's population of about 60 million are eligible to vote.

American hostage on 'strike' in Yemen

SAN'A (AP) — An American kidnapped by Yemeni tribesmen has started a hunger strike and his health is deteriorating, a member of the tribe holding him said Wednesday.

Joe Dell'aria, 50, an engineer for the Houston-based Halliburton Energy Services, was kidnapped Feb. 10 by Murad tribesmen in central Yemen.

"He has refused to eat since Sunday and he is very sick," said the tribesman. He spoke with reporters on condition his name not be used.

He said Mr. Dell'aria also was suffering serious mood swings.

"He can't focus and has a hard time concentrating during conversation," the tribesman said. "He feels elated one moment, and the next he's depressed."

The tribe has been moving Mr. Dell'aria daily from village to village in fear of an attack by government troops, the tribesman said.

There was no way to independently verify the tribesman's claims. Officials at Halliburton Energy and the U.S. embassy refused comment on the report.

The Murad are locked in a dispute with the Yemeni government over a valuable piece of land near the presidential palace in San'a, the Yemeni capital.

But the tribesman on Wednesday said the Murad now want additional compensation for expenses incurred in keeping their hostage.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkish F-4 fighter jet crashes

ANKARA (AFP) — A Turkish F-4 Phantom fighter jet crashed near the town of Konya in southern Turkey and its two pilots were missing, the provincial governor Ziyaeddin Akbulut announced Wednesday. The plane took off from Konya base, 250 kilometres south of Ankara, for a training flight Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. (1700 GMT). Contact with the plane was lost 10 minutes later, the governor said. Wreckage of the F-4 was detected at around midnight near Konya. The accident was due to a technical breakdown, Mr. Akbulut said.

19 Injured in Turkish campus scuffle

ISTANBUL (AP) — Around 50 leftist and ultra-nationalist students at Istanbul University clashed leaving 19 injured, reports said Wednesday. Tuesday's clash ended after riot police intervened between the stone-throwing groups, who were also armed with clubs. Several students were detained.

Iran takes delivery of Chinese ship

DUBAI (R) — The Islamic Republic of Iran shipping lines took delivery of a Chinese multi-purpose 21,000-tonne ship on Wednesday, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. "Iran Makin is the fourth...ship which has been built in China at the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL)," the agency said. IRISL recently ordered an additional five cargo ships worth about \$125 million from China, the agency said. After unloading at Chinese ports, the ship will depart for Iran, IRNA said.

Iran seized 150 tonnes of drugs

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian authorities have seized more than 150 tonnes of drugs in the past 11 months, a police official said Wednesday. Brigadier General Mohsen Ansari, quoted by the official IRNA news agency, spoke of a 20 per cent increase in the amount of drugs seized in eastern provinces since the current Iranian year started on March 20. Iran is a transit route for opium, heroin, morphine and hashish from its eastern neighbours, Pakistan and Afghanistan, destined for Europe. A total of 160 tonnes of drugs were confiscated last year.

Canada reopens embassy in UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Canada has reopened its embassy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to revive its political and economic ties with the major Gulf oil-producer, the Canadian Defence minister said here Wednesday. Douglas Young also said Canada remains committed to the security of the Gulf and would send a frigate in April to join U.S.-dominated Western allies policing the region. "It is an important move. We should have an embassy in this country as it means stronger political, economic and commercial ties," he told reporters after the mission was opened on Tuesday night. "The UAE has become an important country in the region and its economy is one of the biggest economies in the Middle East." Canada shut its embassy in Abu Dhabi in the late 1980s as part of a cost-cutting measure worldwide. Trade was negligible but it has grown as more Canadians came here for work. Official figures showed Canada's exports to the UAE jumped from less than \$20 million 10 years ago to around \$76 million in the first half of 1996 alone. More than 2,000 Canadians now live in the UAE.

Police arrest man who impersonated Alfi's son

CAIRO (AP) — Police have arrested a man for allegedly impersonating the son of Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfi and trying to collect bribes, the state-run Al Ahram newspaper reported Wednesday. The paper said Alaa Abdul Hafeez, a car mechanic, was taken into custody after police filmed him accepting a bribe. An accomplice also was arrested, the paper said. Al Ahram said Abdul Hafeez allegedly told people he was Alaa Al Alfi, son of the interior minister, and that he could solve their problems with the ministry in exchange for money. He apparently promised some he could get their sons into the police academy. The interior ministry is responsible for overseeing internal security. Alaa Al Alfi made headlines last year when he sued opposition newspapers who accused him of using his father's influence to make business deals. He has won at least two of the cases, which are being appealed. Others are pending.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:00Cartoon
14:30Curiosity Show
15:00 They Came From Outer Space
16:00N.B.A. Basketball
17:00News Flash
17:02Out of This World
17:30French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35Parenthood
20:00Cinema: Cinema
20:30 Babylon 5 (Science Fiction)
21:10Kung Fu: The Legend
22:00News in English
22:25 Feature Film: "The Boy Who Drank Too Much"
23:59Tarzuta

PRAYER TIMES

04:09Fajr
05:27(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:41Dhuhr
15:11Asr
17:55Maghreb
19:13Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 622785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775361
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.

Amman International Church
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Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811395
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to rise but remaining below average, skies partly cloudy, and winds westerly moderate. On Friday and Saturday, it will warm with temperatures rising further. On Saturday evening, a depression will affect the Kingdom causing a drop in temperatures. Rainfall is expected and winds becoming southwesterly active. In Amman, it will be warm and sunny, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Mini/Max. Temperatures

Amman03/11
Aqaba08/20
Desserts02/13
Jordan Valley09/18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 08, Aqaba 18 Humidity
readings: Amman 98 per cent,
Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Wafiq Qaddoumi893542
Dr. Bahjat Bader832642
Dr. Naser Ibrahim830432
Dr. Mohammad Al Ghoul70730
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdous pharmacy778336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Al Salan pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Nairouh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Waleed Nabhan995743
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111,
637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity,644281/6
Khalid Maternity,642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malthas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen77101/3
Al-Bashir,775111/26
Arruy, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hilma Modern Hospital(09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by

Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53300 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15Sanaa (RJ)
08:15Bombay (RJ)
09:15Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
09:45New Delhi (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:05Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:30Colombo (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25London (RJ)
16:40Casablanca (RJ)
17:35Moscow (RJ)
18:10Athens (RJ)
19:05Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
19:25Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:40Rome (RJ)

Other Flights

11:00Doha (Q7)
12:40Doha (GF)
13:30Riyadh (SV)
14:10Sharjah (AH)
15:15Damascus (Q7)
16:15Dubai (ME)
20:10Beirut (ME)
20:35Cairo (MS)
21:40Tel Aviv (LY)
01:30Amsterdam (KL)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:20Aqaba (RW)
18:55Tel Aviv (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20Beirut (RJ)
07:15Moscow (RJ)
10:30 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:05 Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:15Rome (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Athens (RJ)
20:10Cairo (RJ)
20:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:20Lamaca (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
22:00 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights

06:00Istanbul (TK)
07:35Beirut, London (BA)
07:45Beirut (ME)
11:45Damascus (Q7)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:00Algiers (AH)
15:00Riyadh (SV)
16:00Doha (Q7)
17:15Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:25Cairo (MS)
22:50Tel Aviv (LY)
02:30Amsterdam (KL)
04:35Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:50Marka (RW)

20:50Aqaba (RW)

HILJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple700/500
Banana600/600
Banana (imported)1000/900
Cabbage100/40
Carrot180/120
Cauliflower380/200
Cucumber (large)160/100
Cucumber (small)240/150
Eggplant270/140
Fava beans850/600
Garlic1100/900
Grape fruit200/100
Lemon430/250
Marrow (large)260/150
Marrow (small)460/200
Onion (green)180/120
Onion (dry)200/120
Orange650/450
Peas850/500
Pepper (hot)300/150
Pepper (sweet)450/300
Potato340/150
Radish70/30
Spinach330/200
String beans850/650
Tomato220/120

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Public sector engineers vow to continue strike

By Ghalia Alul

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Public sector engineers vowed to proceed with escalated measures against the government after the latter announced that professional association members are not expected to receive salary increases in the near future.

However, the government did announce that it will introduce a new allowance system for all professional association members.

The statement came during a meeting between a ministerial committee and 10 professional association presidents yesterday.

"The engineers will not be convinced," Deputy President of the Jordan Engineers' Association (JEA) Husni Abu Ghida lamented Wednesday.

Therefore, he added, to reiterate demands of pay increases and a promotion in salary scale, public sector engineers will stage a sit-in in front of the Prime

Ministry on Saturday.

The engineers have been demanding a 180 per cent increase in their basic monthly salaries which currently average JD 150.

Earlier this month, the ministerial committee agreed to amend the engineers' basic salary allowances and to send the decision to the cabinet for final approval.

JEA members are also asking for a promotion to higher levels on the public sector employee scale.

Public sector employees are rated on a scale of 1-10, the lowest being 10.

In an earlier interview, Mr. Abu Ghida told the Jordan Times that, previous to 1988, newly-graduated engineers began their careers as public employees from grade five, while today these engineers are hired as sixth grade employees with a consequent loss in benefits and allowances.

"We are not asking for more than what we had in

1988," Mr. Abu Ghida asserted.

"Jordanian engineers support the projected allowances system which is fair to all sectors of society. Engineers, who form part of these sectors, are asking to regain part of their acquired rights which they enjoyed 10 years ago," a JEA statement, published in Al Ra'i Arabic daily, stated Wednesday.

The engineers' dilemma was also mentioned in yesterday's Parliament session, with Minister of Housing and Public Works Abdul Hadi Majali contending that the ministry has implemented all points of a memorandum of understanding, reached between the JEA and a special ministerial committee.

He also called on deputies to cooperate on the issue which, he said, is in the interest of all sectors of society.

However, engineers appear determined to carry on with their measures

against the government which, they maintain, has not implemented the memorandum in full.

Mr. Abu Ghida affirmed that the general assembly has called for a meeting with the engineers to discuss additional measures they plan to enact.

The engineers Saturday staged a three-hour sit-in in front of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works. JEA members stated that one week after next Saturday's sit-in, they will cease working for two hours every day. This strike, they added, will continue for a week, to be followed by a general strike on March 22.

Following Saturday's sit-in, Mr. Majali described measures taken by the engineers as illogical and not contributing to government efforts aimed at solving problems facing professional associations.

Mr. Abu Ghida countered that engineers "left room for discussions with the government" and have

started their measures gradually since May of last year.

"We only implemented direct measures after months of waiting and after engineers became frustrated with the situation," said Mr. Abu Ghida.

Following Saturday's strike, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti admonished that the national need for qualified teachers and other specialists is greater than its need for doctors and engineers.

He called on all engineers to "resume their work and act responsibly, tending away from sloganeering which, he said, is incompatible with current economic conditions."

Mr. Abu Ghida countered that the situation of all members of professional associations should improve and reiterated that the engineers are only asking to regain the same rights to which they were entitled ten years ago.



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti visits the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) at Fuheis to inspect measures taken to reduce noise and pollution (Petra photo)

Premier visits cement factory to inspect environmental measures

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim

Kabariti Wednesday inspected the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) at Fuheis and was briefed by JCFC General Manager Abdul Ilah Khatib on environmental measures to reduce smoke and dust pollution.

Mr. Khatib briefed the prime minister regarding the company's production and marketing policies as well as future plans. He then accompanied Mr. Kabariti on a factory tour.

Last June, residents of Fuheis, west of Amman, staged a sit-in on company premises to protest dust and smoke pollution and sent appeals to the government, requesting measures to

force the company to reduce contamination.

The protesters stated that, in addition to dust, town residents were continually confronted by the noise of the company's trucks as well as explosions intended to break the cement rock.

Mr. Khatib described measures being taken by the company as helping end environmental pollution and that the first phase of a comprehensive plan has been completed at the cost of JD 13 million. Work, he confirmed, is underway on the second phase, due to be completed next spring at an estimated cost of JD 8 million.

The company is building large warehouses for cement storage, a project

which is expected to be completed in the middle of next year, Mr. Khatib affirmed.

He estimated the overall cost of fitting the environmental-protection equipment and other related measures to total JD 25 million.

The prime minister requested that company management accelerate work in order to control smoke and dust emitting from factory chimneys.

According to management, the factories, established in 1951 to produce 1,500 tonnes of cement daily, are now producing more than 6,000 tonnes per day, hence the need for measures to deal with the ensuing environmental pollutants.

JWA meets to discuss plight of unemployed writers

By Nadia Mukhlis

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The administrative league of the Jordan Writers Association (JWA) convened this week to discuss the situation of authors and various members facing unemployment.

The association decided to host a meeting on Monday, March 10, in which members of the coalition will unite with those unemployed members to release a statement, requesting that the government provide better possibilities of employment, a piece of land, medical insurance, the establishment of a new association headquarters, the formation of a draft law for the JWA fund and finally legislation for those writers considered exceptionally creative and who do not benefit from any government support.

The association will hold a press conference on Monday and start a two-day sit-in near the association building.

Minister opens seminar on migrant workers, families

AMMAN (Petra) —

Deputising for HRH Princess Basma, Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh Wednesday opened a two-day regional seminar on migrant workers, calling for the protection of their legal rights, in accordance with international regulations set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The seminar was organised by the ILO in conjunction with the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) and is covering the effects of a spouse's absence from wife and children, due to social and economic obligations which force him to work abroad.

According to Dr. Shakhaneh, the meeting's delegates, representing Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Yemen, will focus their attention on a 1995 JNCW-ILO study which aims at safeguarding migrant worker rights as well as those of families left behind.

He said that the JNCW study, as well as related studies from participating countries, should be able to effectively introduce these safeguards.

ILO Representative Nabil Khouri explained that the seminar is slated to enable participants to exchange views and expertise to help ensure the rights of migrant workers, organise the migration process, help workers invest in profitable projects, organise the transfer of worker earnings to families and deal with the consequences of reversed migration.

Representative of the Arab Labour Organisation (ALO) Rasha Abdul Haq maintained that participants will discuss the adverse effects of a husband's absence from his family, particularly from his spouse who must organise family affairs alone.

She stated that this burden can prove overwhelming with negative consequences on their children.

Northern towns elect mayors, council members

AMMAN (Petra) — Residents of 20 northern towns yesterday went to the polls to elect mayors and members of newly-created municipal councils to serve for the next two years.

Polls opened at seven in the morning and remained open until five in the evening, according to a Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment statement.

Election results will be formally announced today in the northern city of Irbid by Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs Abdul Razzak Tubeishat, the statement said.

It noted that mayors and municipal council members in five towns have already

been elected unopposed.

One woman is running for the mayoral position in the town of Mansoura in the Mafrag governorate and eight women are running for seats in the municipal councils of Jabal Sharqi, Osarah, Rajib, Mansoura, Zobia, Maru and Habba.

The statement maintained that these newly-formed municipalities were elevated from their former status of village councils as stipulated by a 1995 Council of Ministers decision, following municipal elections in that year.

Dr. Tubeishat explained that the government has also resolved to reduce the number of municipalities by merging clusters of adjacent

town councils as well as neighbouring village councils.

He affirmed that the merger is expected to be effected by the July 1999 national municipal elections.

The Council of Minister's 1995 decision also stipulated that Jordan be comprised of a total of 50 large municipalities which, he said, will be in a better position financially to implement municipal services.

Many village councils will be linked to larger municipal councils in order to ensure better services for village residents as well as to ensure fee collections for local community services.

International park to be constructed in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman Municipality Wednesday announced the preparation of a study for the creation of an international park in Amman.

The park will be comprised of mini-gardens for diplomatic missions, set in their respective countries' style, it said, and the park is slated to achieve completion by the year 2000.

It will include an artificial lake and boats, a small children's garden, a police station, fire department and post office.

Director of the Parks and

Gardens Department at Amman Municipality Haihat Jweinat explained that the project will be located south of Amman, close to Queen Alia International Airport Highway and will comprise 147 dunums of municipality-owned land.

The aim of this project is to attract foreign visitors and provide Jordanians with a green area free of noise and pollution, he explained.

The first phase of the project will include 47 dunums of land which have already been planted with forest trees, Mr. Jweinat said, while the second

phase entails planting trees on 100 dunums, constructing a restaurant and cafeteria, a rest-house and other facilities such as a games ground, a public library, a small museum and a multi-purpose hall.

There will also be a special train station to transport visitors within the park's parameters and a parking area with space enough for 300 cars and 20 buses either for students or tourists.

Mr. Jweinat estimated the project's cost as JD 500,000. Embassy contacts are being cemented, he said.

What's Going On

FILMS

* "Glory" at the American Centre, Abdoun on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

* "Todo es mentira" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

PANEL DISCUSSION

* "Youth Journalism: The University of Jordan Television Programme" at the Binational Fulbright Commission House, Shmeisani, 4:00-6:00 p.m. (the speaker will be Dr. Christine Cipriani with the participation of Mr. Nazmi Ashour, Mr. Iyad Hamdeh, and Ms. Muna Takadeen) (Tel. 684-760).

Internet gains currency in Kingdom

By Nadia Mukhlis

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — At a time when computers seem to control many facets of our lives, many people are asking what exactly the Internet is and how it might function in our daily lives.

The Internet was originally called "ARPANET," an acronym which stands for the Advanced Research Projects Agency (of the U.S. Department of Defence) and began as a government experiment in 1969 with four computers.

These were linked modulator-demodulator devices, or modems, which allowed computers to transmit information to one another via an ordinary telephone line.

By 1972, universities also had access to what later became known as the Internet.

The World Wide Web on the Internet is a full colour, multimedia database of information. The address

of each site on the Web is called a uniform resource locator (URL).

Each URL begins with http://www, which stands for "hyper text transfer protocol on the world wide web."

Thousands of Web sites, sometimes called webpages, from professional to puerile, are out in cyberspace.

Many facilities can be provided on the Internet such as:

E-Mail: In which one uses link-up system to send messages to others on the same system.

Internet phone: In which one can have unlimited voice communication with anyone anywhere in the world, possessed of Vocal Tec software.

Calls must be prearranged via E-mail, ordinary mail or telephone.

Usenet: a collection of groups which "chat" about various topics.

Other tools the web offers are features showing text

documents which are not slowed down by the transmission of photographs.

Telenet: Upon opening a telenet connection one can benefit from remote or host computers, often those in university libraries. One can also use the Telenet to access one's own computer from a remote location.

FTP (file transfer protocol): one can exchange files with other computers on the Internet.

Gopher: invented at the University of Minnesota and named after that school's mascot, this tool will direct you in English with a menu as to various categories on the Internet.

WAIS (Wide Area Information Server): a system for searching Internet databases via a key word.

Jordan has been on-line since Apr. 1 of last year, said Nadir Kaawar, a technician in the Global One company, the only company in Jordan which provides full Internet services.

2,300 subscribers are on-

line at the Jordanian Internet Company today, he said.

"Full Internet services are provided today in Jordan," according to Majdi Beit Shawish, marketing and sales manager at Global One.

To become a subscriber on the Internet, a person needs a telephone line, a modem, a computer and an application form, he said.

E-mail, electronic mail, the World Wide Web (www) and news group services are all available on the Jordanian Internet, Mr. Shawish affirmed.

The Global One company, formally Sprint Jordan, is 49% owned by companies and trades (France Telecom, Deutsch Telecom and Sprint Telecom), the other 51% is owned by local investors, Mr. Shawish said.

There are also different subscription rates, for example, a person might pay the sum of JD 19 and receive a monthly 8 hours

of global Internet use, while any additional minute would be calculated at JD .075, he explained.

This sum would be forwarded as a monthly invoice to the subscriber's mail box, Mr. Shawish added.

Last year, Jordan's General Intelligence Department (GID) launched itself on the Internet, becoming the first Arab intelligence agency with a site on he World Wide Web.

The site provides information about the role of the department as well as Jordan itself and has an electronic mail facility to stimulate communication with Jordanian citizens as well as subscribers abroad, the department said.

In May, Jordan will host a regional training course, organised by the U.S.-based Internet society, Director of the National Information Centre (NIC) Yusef Nusair told the Jordan Times.

'Agreement may lead to large reduction in international call rates'

By Nadia Mukhlis

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An agreement concluded last Saturday, which liberates the global telecommunications market, might lead to an 80 per cent reduction in international telephone call fees, Minister of Post and Telecommunications Jamal Saraireh said Tuesday.

The agreement, he explained, was concluded at the end of a week-long World Trade Organisation (WTO) conference held in Geneva.

The 68 countries which signed the Geneva agreement, headed by the United States, Europe and Japan which represent 90 per cent of the global telecommunications market, are set to ring up sales totalling over a trillion dollars by the year 2000, Mr. Saraireh affirmed.

They will do so, he enumerated, by opening their markets to global competition in all aspects including services, telecommunications and company shares with the expectation of an ensuing reduction in telephone rates of up to 80 per cent of their current rates.

The minister described the agreement as "a revolution in the telecommunications market in which the main winner is the customer."

Privatisation of the Jordanian Telecommunications Company (JTC) must be accelerated or Jordan will risk a great deal due to the enormous reduction expected to take place globally in international telephone rates and fast growing progress in telecommunications technology, Mr. Saraireh said.

The Kingdom is taking necessary steps to open its market to international competitors, he continued, primarily by having replaced the former Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) by the semi-privatised

(JTC) as of this year.

The JTC was officially registered on Oct. 1 of last year, with a JD 250 million capital, as a government share-holding company.

The second step, Mr. Saraireh elaborated, is appointing a financial advisor to sell 26 per cent of the company equity to a "strategic partner of international standing," allowing it to advance its technology.

The minister briefed the press earlier this month, during a conference which took place when the JTC accepted an offer from an international consortium led by Merrill Lynch and including the local Export and Finance Bank of Jordan and Booz Allen and Hamilton of the United States, to act as a joint financial advisor in the process.

This consortium will be paid a fixed fee of \$1 million as well as a percentage of the proceeds from the equity sale as a so-called "success fee," news agencies reported earlier this month.

The final step will be an evaluation of the actual worth of the company in terms of assets, liabilities et cetera, which process is expected to be completed by July of this year, the minister added.

He described the newly-signed agreement as a challenge to developing countries and asserted that ensuing procedures are still in the preparatory phases therein.

Developing countries in Asia, South America and Africa present the greatest opportunities, as some emerging countries boast growth rates in telephone lines, equipment imports and cellular services double or triple those of industrialised countries, news agencies reported earlier this month.

This has encouraged private companies which offer cheaper rates for international telephone calls to flood these coun-

tries' markets.

Last week, Mr. Saraireh warned against these private companies, describing them as "unauthorised and illegal" in Jordan.

"Security authorities have launched a crackdown on such companies," the minister stated at the time. "Many have been closed down and their owners sent to court."

Jordan is one of the leading progressive countries in the region to rebuild and privatise its telecommunications sector in order to face such challenges, Mr. Saraireh said.

The privatisation of the telecommunications company is an important step the administration wants to accelerate as "any delay might cause lesser incomes for the government."

According to WTO officials, the Geneva agreement caps three years of negotiations and will save hundreds of billions of dollars and provide better consumer services as well as possibilities for investment expansion.

The agreement promotes liberalisation and it gives certainty, security and predictability through a clear set of rules, particularly valuable when rapid growth and technological developments are changing the face of the telecommunications industry and the world economy.

WTO Director General Renato Ruggiero informed a press conference at the end of the Geneva meeting last week.

The agreement covers basic services such as telephones, faxes, telexes as well as satellites, mobile and cellular activities and private communication services.

Kindu on the point of falling — Zaire rebels

GOMA, Zaire (AFP) — Rebels who have captured much of eastern Zaire claimed Wednesday to be on the verge of taking the strategic town of Kindu on the west bank of the Zaire River, but the Zairean government immediately denied this.

Kindu "is about to fall," spokesman Raphael Ghenda told AFP in Goma, the rebel headquarters town on the border with Rwanda.

"Looting by the Zairean Armed Forces and the flight of some of the population corresponds to what has now become a classic scenario," he said. "Our forces are on the point of capturing the town."

The Zairean Defence Ministry in Kinshasa dismissed the reports as "rumours" but admitted there was heavy fighting 36 kilometres to the east of the town between army and rebel troops. It said rebels had been caught in a pincer movement and had suffered heavy casualties.

Well-informed sources in Kinshanga, where the government's counter-offensive against the rebels is based, said government troops Wednesday remained in

control of Kindu, but nearly all of the population had fled because of looting by soldiers.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said army deserters from the east were responsible for the looting and had clashed with regular army troops sent in as reinforcements from Kinshasa to prevent the town from falling into rebel hands.

Witnesses in Kindu said the government troops had managed to disarm most of the deserters, the majority of whom fled.

Looting by Zaire's underpaid, ill-equipped and ill-disciplined soldiers is usually a sign that they are preparing to abandon a town. The rebels usually give them a day or two to flee to avoid unnecessary battle casualties.

U.N. officials have reported looting and flight in Kindu, though in Kinshasa the Defence Ministry denied this and said the Tutsi-led rebels who have captured some 20 per cent of this vast central African country were still at Kalima, 110 kilometres to the east.

The claims and counter-claims came as Zairean

rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila was reportedly talking to representatives of President Nelson Mandela's government, the United States, United Nations and Organisation of African Unity in South Africa on ways to end the crisis in Africa's Great Lakes region. Mr. Kabila flew to South Africa in secret Tuesday.

The capture of Kindu would give the rebels their first foothold on the Zaire River, a strategic transport artery which flows through Kisangani, the capital of Haut Zaire province, all the way to Kinshasa in the far west.

Kindu also has an airport that can take big planes, a railroad for the mineral-rich Shaba province, and a major military base.

U.N. World Food Programme spokeswoman Brenda Barton said Tuesday that the agency was looking at diverting the food aid which arrives in Kindu from Lusaka, the Zambian capital, putting it on barges farther downstream. It goes to Kisangani to be ferried on in small planes to the Tingi-Tingi camp for Rwandan Hutu refugees southeast of Kisangani.

That threatened camp, holding some 150,000 refugees, is the last one operating in eastern Zaire; another 250,000 refugees have fled their camps, with some of the men reported to be fighting alongside government troops and others, together with women and children, hiding out in the bush.

The rebels captured Bukavu, on the border with Rwanda, shortly after going on the offensive last October, with one column pushing west, capturing the town of Shabunda, where refugees had settled after fleeing their camps along the border.

Some 25,000 of those refugees then fled farther west to Kalima, about half-way between Shabunda and Kindu.

Kisangani, the most important government-held town in the region with a major airport, is the rebels' next target.

It is the base of what the government announced would be a crushing counter-offensive, but which crumbled as the soldiers fled before the rebels' steady advance.

S. Korea police step up hunt for Northern spies

SEOUL (R) — South Korean police stepped up a manhunt Wednesday for two suspected North Korean assassins after the death of a Pyongyang defector who was shot earlier this month, a police official said.

Police are working on the theory that Pyongyang instructed its agents to murder Lee Han-Yong as a warning to South Korea and other North Korean defectors after the defection of the country's top ideologue on Feb. 12.

Mr. Lee was shot in the head and chest at the doorway to a friend's apartment in a Seoul suburb three days after Hwang Jang-Yop defected to Seoul's consular mission in Beijing. Mr. Lee died Tuesday.

Talks between South Korea and China over the fate of Mr. Hwang resumed in Beijing Wednesday after being stalled by the death of Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, a South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said in Seoul.

"Contacts between Seoul and Beijing have resumed, but so far no important developments have been reported," Lee Kyu-Hyung said.

The domestic Yonhap News Agency said South Korean representatives had repeated a request for China to grant Mr. Hwang safe passage to Seoul, but Bei-

jing officials continued to stall for fear of offending Socialist ally North Korea.

"It may take some time before the issue is resolved as the Chinese government is taking pains to settle it in a manner that doesn't get on North Korea's nerves," Yonhap quoted an official in Seoul's embassy in Beijing as saying.

South Korean police have virtually ruled out earlier suspicions that Mr. Lee might have been gunned down by loan sharks or underworld hitmen, police spokesman Ha Seung-Gyun said.

"All the evidence we have points to an act of North Korean spies," Mr. Ha said in an interview.

Mr. Lee, who was the nephew of Pyongyang leader Kim Jong-Il's ex-wife, ran into financial trouble after he defected to the South in 1982 and went into business. He spent 10 months in jail in 1993 for embezzling funds.

Mr. Lee went to great lengths to disguise his real identity, changing his name from Li Il-Nam and even undergoing plastic surgery on his face.

Desperate for money, he went public last year with a biography and appeared on a talk show after his mother's defection, reportedly to a Western nation.

"We suspect the gun used was a Belgian-made Brow-

ning pistol, which is often used by North Korean agents. The bullet shells found on the scene are the same found in a previous spy incident," Mr. Ha said.

Police were preparing to scatter 30,000 leaflets bearing a computer-enhanced video image of one of the assassins.

One of the suspects was caught by a bank surveillance camera before the shooting. A reward of \$140,000 for information on the killing has already been offered.

The black-and-white image shows one of the two suspected attackers, a man in his late twenties or early thirties wearing a half-length overcoat.

Mr. Ha said police were relying heavily on citizens' reports to try to crack the case.

Lee is the first defector to be assassinated since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, according to police.

The shooting has frightened the small community of Pyongyang defectors in Seoul. Some 600 escapees now live in the south, and the celebrities among them have begun surrounding themselves with bodyguards.

Mr. Hwang, the Pyongyang ideologue now in Beijing, was reported by South Korean media to have revealed that North Korea has 50,000 agents in the South.

S. Korea's Kim to shake up cabinet

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Young-Sam set about a major cabinet reshuffle Wednesday in hopes of avoiding being labelled a lame duck during his last year in office.

Earlier in the day all his cabinet ministers had offered to resign to give him a free hand in carrying out the shake-up.

The move came a day after the president solemnly apologised to the nation for a loans scandal which undermined the failure of his much-vaunted anti-corruption reforms.

"President Kim is working on a major reshuffle in the government and the ruling party," a presidential aide told Reuters. "A new cabinet line-up will be announced soon."

Leaders of the ruling New Korea Party and top presidential aides had already offered to step down after Mr. Kim promised Tuesday to heed criticism that his close associates were incapable of carrying through reforms.

Newspapers and political commentators welcomed news of the major reshuffle, saying Mr. Kim had been misled by his personal aides, but added that this alone would do little to reverse his plunging popularity.

"The people will not trust state policies unless the president's associates are dropped in a resolute manner," the leading daily Dong-A Ilbo said in an editorial.

"But public mistrust will be enormous if the reshuffle is just aimed at introducing a new political phase or forming a new line-up to prepare for the presidential elections," it said.

Three of Mr. Kim's senior aides, including a cabinet minister, have been arrested on bribery charges over the scandal involving dubious loans to the failed Hanbo Steel Co., flagship of the country's 14th largest conglomerate.

Prosecutors said banks, pressured by politicians, offered huge loans in return for kickbacks from Hanbo, which racked up \$5.8 billion in debts before going bankrupt on Jan. 23.

Mr. Kim, a former dissident who bailed previous military rulers, took power in 1993 vowing a clean society yet now his government is lurching from one corruption scandal to another.



Press unions and other organisations gather outside the Noticias magazine building in a nationwide minute of silence to demand that police solve the brutal murder of Noticias' news photographer Jose Luis Cabezas. The photographer, who had worked on reports about police corruption, was shot to death and his body burnt a month ago. Five suspects have been arrested but the investigating judge is also looking into the possibility that police officers from the province of Buenos Aires may have been involved in the crime (Reuters photo)

Argentine journalists demand justice for newsmen's murder

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentine journalists held a rally and a minute of silence Tuesday to mark one month since the brutal murder of a news photographer, a crime that many suspect has links with authorities.

A crowd of thousands including politicians, unionists and human rights groups rallied at the offices of news magazine Noticias to demand justice for the murder of its photographer Jose Luis Cabezas. Taxis and buses stopped and church bells tolled in the minute's silent homage.

Cabezas' charred and handcuffed body was found in a burned-out car in the beach resort of Pinamar on Jan. 25. The 35-year-old father of three had been tortured, shot in the head, doused with gasoline and burned to a skeleton.

It was a gruesome reminder of the "death squads" that terrorised Argentina before and during the military rule of 1976 to 1983. Cabezas' former colleague

Gabriel Micchi told the "crowd" chanting "justice, justice": "this crime symbolises for all of Argentina the return of ghosts from the past."

In Lima, a group of about 20 international photographers covering the siege at the residence of the Japanese ambassador to Peru also commemorated the killing, raising their cameras and holding up photographs of Cabezas.

A poll published in Argentina Tuesday showed 85 per cent thought the killers "have links with political powers" and 59 per cent feared it "presages a new wave of political violence."

In a damning indictment of the Peronist administration of President Carlos Menem, the poll in the respected financial daily El Cronista also showed more than 91 per cent believe "there are mafias linked with or protected by the government."

Another poll in Clarin newspaper said 71 per cent thought the crime would not

be solved. Five suspects were being held but investigators said none of them were thought to be the masterminds of the crime.

One of those arrested, convicted killer Margarita Di Tullio, alias "Pepita La Pistolera" (Pepita the Gun Girl), told Clarin from prison: "Cabezas' killing was a horrendous political crime and they wanted a scapegoat with a record like mine, so here I am."

Investigators said they were also investigating members of the Buenos Aires Provincial Police in charge of the case.

Noticias, the country's top-selling weekly news magazine, has uncovered major corruption scandals, including graft in the Buenos Aires provincial police.

One theory has also linked the murder to a power struggle between Mr. Menem and Buenos Aires province's Peronist Governor Eduardo Duhalde, who is campaigning to succeed Mr. Menem in 1999.

7 Algerian rebels killed, 2 girls kidnapped in Algiers

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian security forces have killed seven armed Islamic extremists in a neighbourhood of the capital where two schoolgirls were kidnapped, the daily La Tribune reported Wednesday.

The seven were killed in the Bouzareah area of Algiers overnight Monday to Tuesday, the newspaper said.

The two girls, aged 16 and 18, were seized outside the Petit-Bois High School in the same area, it said, without giving details on the number or identity of the kidnappers.

"The kidnapping has sown disarray among citizens," the newspaper said, adding that "the wave of terrorist attacks which continues to target the Algiers area is aimed mainly at women."

It said that by attacking what it described as an "easy target," the Islamic militants were aiming at a "psychological effect ... on the female sex to force them

to wear the veil."

A schoolgirl was killed last Thursday in the Casbah, the old heart of the city, and security forces carried out a "vast search operation" in the area overnight Monday to Tuesday.

The newspaper said armed extremists were hiding out in the Casbah's warren of winding streets.

La Tribune said that, "despite the blows struck by security services against armed groups, this new wave of violence shows that tensions persist in the capital."

A series of attacks has hit Algiers in the past few days, leaving several people dead.

Five people were found mutilated in the suburb of Frais-Vallon, while a hairdresser was shot to death early Saturday in a market place in the Bab Al Oued neighbourhood. Another young woman suffered serious gunshot wounds in the nearby Beau Fraiser region witnesses said.

A few hours later two girls

and an older woman were killed in Bouzareah.

Mass killings, village massacres and bomb attacks have been frequent occurrences in Algeria since 1992 when the military-backed government cancelled the second round of elections since banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

The militant Armed Islamic Group (GIA) over the weekend announced a "new phase" in its battle against authorities in a statement signed by its leader, Antar Zouabri, published in the Al Hayat Arab daily in London.

The daily Al Khabar reported Tuesday that armed extremists had killed 18 people, slitting the throats of 17 of them, at an illegal roadblock 400 kilometres southwest of the capital.

The authorities have been carrying out major operations aimed at crushing the extremists for the last few weeks.

Taleban investigate 2 Frenchmen over Islamic violations

KABUL (AFP) — Two Frenchmen arrested by the Taleban authorities in Kabul are under investigation for committing at least six violations to Islamic Law, an official said Wednesday. "If they have not (committed violations) they will be exonerated. If they have, they will be dealt with according to Islamic Shariat," declared Attorney-General Maulavi Jalilullah Maulawizada.

He doubted the death penalty would apply, as the case stood at present, but said further investigation was needed and it was up to the Supreme Court to pass the final verdict and punishment.

The case against the two Frenchmen, employed by as aid workers by Action Contre La Faim (ACF), has highlighted the Taleban's ultra-strict enforcement of Islamic Law, or Shariat.

The two were arrested last Saturday when Taleban raided an ACF guesthouse where a farewell lunch for three female expatriate ACF employees was attended by ACF female staff.

Although the two Frenchmen were in the ACF compound, they did not attend the lunch but had retired to another building, according to other foreign aid workers in Kabul.

The Taleban attorney-general said the alleged violations by Frederic Michel and Jose Daniel Lorente "are many," and added that they "have admitted" to some of them.

The first violation was that Afghan women had entered a foreigner's house without official permission.

"We have announced on radio that no foreigner can employ an Afghan woman without the authorisation of the Islamic state of Afghanistan or let them visit institutions or homes," Mr. Maulawizada stated.

He said the second violation was that the "security organs" should have given permission in advance of the proposed function.

Thirdly, he said, it was a violation of Islamic principles for Afghan women to be present with Afghan men who are not close family, apparently a reference to four ACF Afghan male staff — cooks, drivers or watchmen — who were also arrested.

More serious offenses relate to the fourth alleged violation.

"These women had been seen by the (Taleban) security people with uncovered heads and half-naked with their hosts," said Mr. Maulawizada.

The attorney-general reported that the Taleban stated they had found the two Frenchmen in the same room as the "half-naked" Afghan women.

He apparently did not mean that they were totally undressed, but had removed their Islamic body-veils and due to low-cut dresses had exposed some flesh.

"They had made their clothes in such a style that their breasts were exposed and naked," Mr. Maulawizada explained.

The fifth violation was that photographs were taken of the Afghan women during the lunch.

"Pictures are absolutely forbidden to be taken, particularly of women, half-naked women, by a stranger," Mr. Maulawizada said.

"Then these pictures would be taken outside (the country) for defaming the Islamic state of Afghanistan. These are all violations," the attorney-general stressed.

Finally he said music was being played with both Afghans and foreigners together, during this ACF function.

"You know that in Islamic Afghanistan it is forbidden to listen to music," the attorney-general said.

Sri Lankan opposition leader escapes assassination bid

COLOMBO (AFP) — Gunmen opened fire at a top opposition leader in Sri Lanka Wednesday, shortly after his party called for the decommissioning of guns in the hands of politicians ahead next months local polls.

Opposition United National Party (UNP) General Secretary Gamini Athukorale escaped unhurt after gunmen ambushed his jeep and fired at him in the Ni-vithigala area, party officials said.

"A government candidate (at the March 21 election) was in the tractor that was used to block our general secretary's vehicle," a UNP spokesman said. "His body guards did not retaliate but instead moved out quickly."

"Mr. Athukorale had a close shave. If his body guards opened fire it would have led to a lot of violence."

The shooting came within hours of UNP chief and former Premier Ranil Wickremesinghe calling for the withdrawal of weapons amid escalating violence in the run up to the crucial local elections.

Mr. Wickremesinghe said the campaign for the March 21 vote was the "most violent" and urged the government to take back guns issued to elected representatives.

"Taking the guns of UNP supporters alone will not be useful," Mr. Wickremesinghe told reporters here. "All the weapons given to politicians, including those in the government, must be withdrawn."

He said three shotguns issued to his body guards in 1989 were taken away by the police Tuesday.

There were 160 cases of arson, assault and intimidation against UNP supporters

in the past two weeks and he accused government ministers of leading attacks on opposition candidates contesting the local elections, he said.

Mr. Wickremesinghe also called for action against those responsible for causing violence in the provinces and said he had suspended one of his legislators accused of murdering a ruling party MP earlier this month.

"But what has the government done," Mr. Wickremesinghe said. "There is one senior minister accused of attempted murder, a deputy minister charged with murder and another facing 46 criminal cases. Nothing is done about them."

The government has announced death penalty for gun offences under sweeping emergency regulations.



Chinese President Jiang Zemin (left) consoles Zhuo Lin (3rd left), widow of the late Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping during a memorial service for Deng. Zhuo Lin is accompanied by daughters Deng Nan (2nd left), Deng Rong (2nd right) and Deng Lin (right) (Reuters photo)

Yeltsin prepares comeback speech, premier pledges change

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin, clearly intent on showing he has recovered from illness, ordered his staff Tuesday to formally summon parliament on March 6, when he will present his annual state of the nation address.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, responding to Mr. Yeltsin's sharp criticism Monday of his government's performance, vowed to mark the president's speech with a major cabinet reshuffle.

Mr. Yeltsin's press office said he had told his representatives in both houses of parliament to have "their speakers" summon the chambers on March 6 at 11 a.m. (0800 GMT) for the presentation of the presidential address.

As usual, Mr. Yeltsin will address the annual joint session of parliament in the marble hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace, once the venue for Soviet Communist Party leadership meetings.

Mr. Yeltsin's political foes have said that the lengthy address will be a hard test for the 66-year-old leader who had a heart bypass in November and went down with pneumonia at new year.

Mr. Yeltsin's doctors have said the president would be fit by March 6 to stand up to the ceremony.

His return to work after months of absence has been overshadowed by growing economic and social crisis in the country and fresh clashes among top Kremlin officials.

Mr. Yeltsin told Mr. Chernomyrdin Monday that the failure of his cabinet to solve the problem of wage and pension delays had led to a loss of support for the president among ordinary Russians, and urged the premier to change some figures in the government.

His spokesman later said the premier would not be sacked. "We are preparing (cabinet changes), they will not only be cosmetic. We are talking of...a deepening of economic reforms," Mr. Chernomyrdin said Tuesday. He said the changes would not alter the direction of reforms, but would speed them up.

Cabinet spokesman Igor Shabdrusulov said the government changes could be announced on March 6 after Mr. Yeltsin's address. Non-payment of wages and pensions is one major reason for the government's unpopularity. Locked in a web of debt, many firms say they cannot pay their workers because their suppliers do not pay them on time.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is bankrolling reforms with a \$10 billion three-year loan, but Tuesday it said it was not yet ready to hand over more cash. The IMF is worried about low tax revenues and delays in restructuring Soviet-era industrial plants.

Communist Party leader

Gennady Zyuganov, who lost to Mr. Yeltsin in last July's presidential election, said Tuesday that reshuffling ministers would not address Russia's real problems.

"We insist on a government of popular trust," he told reporters, suggesting that opposition figures should be brought into the cabinet.

On his return, Mr. Yeltsin will also have to start making good on his election campaign pledge to reform Russia's massive but deteriorating cold war-era armed forces.

Reform has been stalled by the tug-of-war between Defence Minister Igor Rodionov and the civilian secretary of the Kremlin Defence Council, Yuri Baturin, over who takes charge of change.

Gen. Rodionov openly blasted Mr. Baturin Sunday for neglecting the views of the military and said the reform plan promoted by the Defence Council was harmful for national security.

Gen. Rodionov has made clear that there was next to no chance of compromise between his vision of the 21st century Russian army and that of Mr. Baturin. His statement prompted rumours that the straight-talking defence minister could go in the reshuffle.

But Interfax News Agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman as saying there were no plans to replace Gen. Rodionov.

former cold war foes. Mr. Jagland, commenting on the Russian stance, said "these things hang together. The enlargement issue has been put on the agenda by NATO. You cannot remove it."

"But you can arrange this so that Russia gets a share in developments in Europe and we can talk about all these questions linked to the new security problems within the charter now being worked out."

"We look positively on the signals that have come," Mr. Jagland said. "I hope we can solve this so that NATO can expand and Russia can be an active partner in European security policy."

NATO sources say any final NATO-Russia document on post-cold war relations could be endorsed by heads of state and government at a summit in Madrid in July at which NATO will invite some former Warsaw Pact states to join the alliance.

with Russia. The Russian minister said Arctic cooperation between Moscow and Oslo could serve as an example for other countries. But, on the question of NATO enlargement, he differed with Mr. Jagland.

Mr. Primakov, speaking in Russian, said enlargement "would upset relations both as regards the military and geopolitical situation because we fear new dividing lines will emerge in Europe."

"We have no talks on the expansion of NATO but we have talks on how to shape our relations," said Mr. Primakov, who on Monday briefed Norwegian leaders on his discussions Sunday in Brussels with NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana.

Mr. Primakov told reporters in Oslo Monday that Moscow and NATO had made progress on a binding document guiding relations between the

two countries. He said the document would be signed by the end of the year.

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Tajik troops close in on warlords' forces

MOSCOW (AFP) — Tajik government troops Wednesday closed in on gunmen loyal to the Sadirov brothers, who took 16 people including eight U.N. workers hostage earlier this month, a Tajik presidential spokesman told Interfax News Agency.

The spokesman, Zafar Saidov, said some of the gunmen had been killed and some arrested in the operation in Dzhatyoni, a village 85 kilometres east of the capital Dushanbe.

"The entire area has been brought under control," Mr. Saidov said, adding that checkpoints had been set up by government troops.

"The operation to detain or liquidate the armed group is continuing," he said.

On Tuesday, Kassim Ismatov, an Islamic opposition commander, said at least 25 people had died in fighting between the opposition and the Sadirov brothers' forces around Kofarnikhon, 20 kilometres east of Dushanbe.

The Sadirov brothers were once allies of the Islamic opposition, but in recent months the warlords, operating in the foothills of the Pamir Mountains, appeared to be acting independently.

Bakhtom Sadirov took 16 hostages two weeks ago to demand that his brother Rizvon Sadirov and his men be allowed to travel from neighbouring Afghanistan to join him.

The captives were freed in stages, the last among them on Feb. 17, after President Emomali Rakhmonov intervened.

Bakhtom Sadirov obtained weapons and the return of 33 of his followers from Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Tajik government and opposition officials were set to begin a new round of peace talks in Moscow Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Saidov, quoted by Interfax, said both sides planned to discuss political issues, including the legalisation of political parties and opposition media.

Speaking to government delegates before their departure, Mr. Rakhmonov said he hoped protocols on political and military issues would be signed at the talks.

A previous round of talks ended in Tehran on Feb. 19 with no tangible results, according to well-informed sources.

China starts life after Deng; bombings reported in west

BEIJING (R) — One week after the death of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, Chinese raced Wednesday to obey his call to "enrich yourselves" but flaws appeared in his legacy with deadly bombings in a Muslim minority region.

Traffic jams snarled the streets of the capital, Beijing, as businesses worked overtime to catch up on opportunities delayed or missed while the nation slowed to mark six days of mourning for Deng, who died last Wednesday at 92.

"It's just been impossible the last few days," said one Beijing businesswoman. "Everyone has been watching television or out of their offices because of the mourning for Deng Xiaoping."

"But things are more normal today," she said. "People are starting to answer their telephones."

Deng's successor as leader of 1.2 billion Chinese, Communist Party chief and state President Jiang Zemin, moved swiftly to assert himself a day after Chinese from the deserts of Central Asia to booming east coast cities said farewell to the

man who transformed China.

A photograph of Mr. Jiang reading the eulogy to China's last strongman from the generation of Mao Tsetong revolutionaries dominated the front page of the People's Daily, dwarfing a picture of his deceased patron.

An editorial praised Deng for ensuring a smooth succession process and hailed Mr. Jiang as a "loyal, reliable, enterprising, and promising successor to the great cause... pioneered by comrade Deng Xiaoping."

Mr. Jiang had "lived up to the people's great trust and expectations," it said.

But signs of cracks in the unity that Mr. Jiang has presented as Deng's legacy appeared within hours of Tuesday's memorial rites when a string of carefully timed bombings rocked the mainly Muslim city of Urumqi in western China.

Three time-bombs planted on buses blew up in rapid succession, killing at least seven people, wounding 60 and shattering the nation's calm in the delicate aftermath of Deng's death.

Officials said they suspec-

ted that Muslim separatists in the region populated mainly by ethnic Uighurs could be responsible and said the timing of the attacks, on the day of Deng's memorial rites in far-off Beijing, was no coincidence.

The attacks could not have come at a worse time for Mr. Jiang as he finds himself centre-stage and without a protector for the first time in the seven years since Deng plucked him from a regional party position to lead China into the 21st century.

Diplomats say Mr. Jiang needs to convince his people that he is in charge and can overcome attacks from pretenders to the "mandate of heaven," proving he can control this vast, disparate nation.

They questioned whether Jiang had the ability to maintain the delicate balance Deng was able to broker between capitalist-style reforms and Communist control, and among party functionaries hungry for power.

Mr. Jiang, who holds China's three top jobs — party

chief, state president and armed forces commander-in-chief — has already tried to win the backing of the three-million-strong People's Liberation Army with promises of modernisation.

Analysts say the support of the military is essential for the survival of Mr. Jiang, who lacks his late patron's revolutionary pedigree.

With farewell rites completed for the veteran strongman, Mr. Jiang stands unprotected in the cut-throat world of Chinese politics and, diplomats said, he has yet to prove whether he is a dragon like his late protector or merely a paper tiger.

"We will have to see if the tiger is one of paper — or not," said one Western diplomat Tuesday.

Mr. Jiang, 70 and born in the Chinese Year of the Tiger, emerged last week with the death of Deng from under the vast shadow cast by the diminutive revolutionary who was born in the most auspicious of China's lunar calendar years — the Dragon.

U.S. envoy calls for early Albanian elections

TIRANA (R) — The U.S. ambassador in Tirana, expressing growing concern over recent unrest in Albania, has urged President Sali Berisha's government to draft a new constitution and call early elections.

Ambassador Marisa Lino told the independent daily Koha Jone that the United States and Europe had adopted a similar position towards Albania and called for political parties to begin a serious dialogue over the Balkan state's future.

"I do not see any main differences in our stands," Ms. Lino told the newspaper in an interview published Wednesday. "There exists

great concern for what has happened after the collapse of the Pyramid schemes."

Albania has been hit by a wave of violent protests since a number of fraudulent Pyramid investment schemes collapsed last month, unable to repay hundreds of thousands of customers who had ploughed their savings into the high-yield, high-risk schemes.

In Washington, the State Department said Tuesday it was "deeply concerned" about growing disorder in Albania over the financial scandal and called on protesters and authorities to refrain from further violence.

"The process of compiling a new constitution would lay the basis for fresh elections, which is what we have been saying during the past nine months," Ms. Lino said.

She said the United States had not changed its attitude towards last May's general election, which it considered was "seriously manipulated."

Most foreign diplomats in Tirana attended the first session of the new Albanian parliament last July but the United States pointedly stayed away.

Ms. Lino said she had no immediate plans to attend parliament next week for vot-

ing to elect a president. Mr. Berisha is widely expected to be given a new five-year mandate as the assembly is dominated by his right-wing Democratic Party.

The European Union Monday offered Albania help to get its economy and financial institutions in order, but only if Tirana worked closely with the International Monetary Fund and other world bodies.

Foreign ministers from the 15-nation bloc backed moves by the European Commission to give money and technical assistance to Albania, but insisted the government stick to democratic principles.

Pakistan gets cabinet, but defence post left open

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, thrust to power in Feb. 3 elections, named a small cabinet Wednesday but left the key defence post unfilled.

Mr. Sharif, 47, who has pledged to restrict the size of the cabinet to show his government's commitment to austerity, gave other important ministries to stalwarts of his Pakistan Muslim League (PML), most of them from the populous province of Punjab.

The religious Jamaat-i-Islami Party, which boycotted the elections, criticised what it saw as regional bias. "The prime minister has ignored smaller provinces. This is a big mistake," the party's deputy leader, Ghilafoor Ahmad, told Reuters.

Six full ministers and a minister of state were sworn in Tuesday night by President Farooq Leghari, but their portfolios were not announced until the early hours of Wednesday.

PML Secretary-General Sartaj Aziz was made finance minister, the post he held in the last Sharif cabinet from 1990 to 1993.

Former National Assembly Speaker Gohar Ayub Khan became foreign minister and Punjab PML chief Shujaat Hussain returned to the Interior Ministry, where he served previously under Mr. Sharif.

Ishaq Dar, a new face, took the Commerce Ministry, and Nisar Ali the Water and Power Ministry, while Abid Hussain, a former ambassador to the United States and the only woman in the cabinet, was given the Population Welfare Ministry.

The new ministers were also put in charge of other ministries until the cabinet is expanded.

A little-known National Assembly deputy from Sind, Asghar Ali Shah, was named minister of state for housing and works.

PML information secretary Mushahid Hussain was appointed the prime minister's adviser on information and media development.

Mr. Sharif did not name a defence minister, one of four ministries who will sit with top generals on the newly created Council for Defence and National Security under Mr. Leghari.

Mr. Sharif said ministers to be appointed later would include representatives from his ally, the left-wing Awami National Party, and the Karachi-based ethnic Mohajir National Movement.

The announcement created no stir on the Karachi Stock Exchange, where the 100-share index edged 0.07 per cent

down to 1,742 points on profit-taking after recent gains.

"The new cabinet is more or less in line with expectations," said Sameer Ahmad of Ing Baring. "Aziz's inclusion will be taken as positive as it confirms market expectations that Sharif's government will do better at managing the economy."

Mr. Sharif met businessmen Wednesday to outline an economic strategy of self-reliance, emphasising the importance of export-led growth to solve the balance of payments problem.

Mr. Sharif, an industrialist, offered to cut taxes if businessmen promised not to evade them and said he would put "blind faith" in their assurances if they reciprocated.

Only about a million of Pakistan's more than 131 million people pay direct taxes.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's new foreign minister has called for India to show a positive attitude over the simmering Kashmir dispute, press reports said Wednesday.

If Arabs and Israel could reach a peaceful solution to their dispute, then India and Pakistan can also resolve the Kashmir problem through dialogue, he told reporters after being sworn in.

"We expect a positive attitude from the Indian side in this regard," Mr. Gohar Ayub said, calling for a negotiated solution on the basis of a U.N. resolution which called for a plebiscite in the disputed territory.

The Nation daily quoted the minister as saying he would make efforts to have good relations with India. The two countries both claim Kashmir and have fought two wars over Kashmir since 1947.

"Relations with India will be no more of the same nature. We will have to normalise these relations," he said according to the newspaper.

Accusing former Premier Bhutto of mishandling foreign policy, he said Pakistan had been "badly isolated" during the previous government.

Stressing that his ministry needed to be revamped, Mr. Ayub Khan said the ministry under Ms. Bhutto had become an organisation for arranging foreign tours for rulers rather than protecting the national interest, the daily said.

Ms. Bhutto, who was ousted by President Farooq Ahmad Leghari in November had reportedly visited some 50 countries in her three-year era.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif offered to hold talks with India on Kashmir soon after his Pakistan Muslim League swept the Feb. 3 general election. He said he wanted to promote trade with India.

Cambodia's King Sihanouk wants to abdicate

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk wants to abdicate his throne and become a common citizen but is worried that doing so may thrust his country into greater turmoil.

However, he reiterated in his monthly bulletin published Wednesday that he does not want to return to political life and said that even if he stood down before scheduled national elections in 1998, he would never stand as a candidate for office from any party.

The 74-year-old monarch made his intentions known in a bulletin released by the palace just hours after he left Cambodia Wednesday for medical examinations in China.

"I am seriously envisaging abdicating without intending to go to live in another country," the king said in an interview with a team from the bulletin.

"But my problem is twofold. First, how do I abdicate without people blaming me for what will go wrong in Cambodia and without people accusing me of wanting to involve myself in the

political life of the country?"

"Then, once I have stepped down, could I live peacefully in the middle of our motherland and close to those who love me and who have asked me to no longer 'flee abroad' leaving them orphans?"

But he said he would not succumb to the wishes of people who want him to resume a political role.

"I will never present myself for the 1998 legislative elections and it will never be a question for me to resuscitate (my old party) or found a new political party,"

he said.

The king, apparently disheartened by a growing trend toward republicanism and the constant political tension and rivalry between his country's two main political parties, said the days of the Cambodian monarchy were limited.

"My days and those of the Khmer monarchy are numbered and this despite the fact that the majority of our people and our monks are still extremely attached to me personally," the king said.

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Jordan Times advertising department.

Israel drawing battle line

AS THE political battle for Jerusalem reaches a fever pitch ahead of the final status talks, which are scheduled to start soon, Jordan has joined the Palestinians and other Arab and Muslim countries in sounding the alarm over Israeli attempts to predetermine the future of the city before these negotiations even start. Jordan's rejection of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's and his government's resolution to go ahead with building in the Abu Ghneim area in East Jerusalem is no more evident than in the strongly-worded letter His Majesty King Hussein sent to the Israeli leader on Wednesday and the decision by HRH Crown Prince Hassan to put off a planned visit to Israel. The Kingdom cannot continue conducting business as usual with Israel while it rejects reason and risks taking the whole region back onto the path of violence, extremism and war.

Despite moves by the Palestinian leadership towards a compromise solution on Jerusalem, the Israeli government seems determined to cross every red line concerning the future of the city. The top aide to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, said a few days ago that the Palestinians are prepared to accept a united Jerusalem with no walls separating Arabs in the east from Israelis in the west on condition that an administratively united Jerusalem not prohibit the Palestinians from establishing their capital in the Arab side. This position conforms to that of the U.S., Mr. Abbas continued, since Washington rules out the division of the city and refuses to formally accept its annexation by Israel.

In its determined effort to make the whole of Jerusalem its exclusive capital and deny Arab rights in it, however, Israel has been pursuing all sorts of policies that run contrary to international law. These include the systematic and deliberate discrimination against the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, the methodical creation of a demographic verity in favour of the Jewish population, the choking of urban development for the Palestinians, the expropriation of 100,000 dunums of Arab land in the Jerusalem area since 1967 on which about 40,000 housing units have been constructed to accommodate Jewish residents. About 88 per cent of all new dwellings in Jerusalem were devoted to Jews even though the Arab population constitutes about 30 per cent of the total population. The problems can only worsen when construction on Jabal Abu Ghneim takes place.

Urgently needed, therefore, is an arrangement for Jerusalem that would resolve the conflicting positions of the Arab and Israeli sides by granting the Arabs their legitimate rights but without having the city split in half. It is doubtful though that the two sides can find a middle road without the intervention of the sponsors of the peace process. The major players must be prepared to draw up alternative solutions to the city in a bid to help the principal parties untangle the knots. In the context of peace and coexistence between the Jews and the Arabs, there is no reason why the aspirations of the two sides cannot be reconciled.

But in order to save the day the main thrust of any new international effort must be to halt all actions by Israel to predetermine the outcome of the final status talks or enforce irrevocable measures. If Israel continues to aim to single-handedly determine the future of the city, there will be nothing left to negotiate. Without the resolution of the new crisis over the city, the peace regime in the region would suffer immeasurably. The wound that would be left in the event the Israeli government rebuffs all calls for fair play will most certainly fester and in the future explode.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Wednesday expressed dismay at the Arab countries' behaviour with regard to Israel's practices in the occupied Arab territories, saying that besides remaining disunited and in disarray, they plead with the Israelis to stop their aggression and with the European and Americans to help them end the Israeli aggression and occupation of their lands. How can the world believe the Arabs when they appeal for help against Israel's atrocities, when Arab states maintain diplomatic and trade links with the Jewish state and welcome Israeli leaders, asked Ibrahim Absi. He said the Arabs, in general, and the Palestinians, in particular, are wasting their time by resorting to foreign countries for help because foreign nations would not offer aid as long as the Arabs themselves continue their hostilities against one another. The Arabs realise too well that Israel scoffs at Arab behaviour and at Arab appeal to the Israeli leaders to halt aggression, the seizure of Arab lands and the construction of Jewish settlements because the Jewish state realises that the Arabs are not in a position to impose a change on its settlements programmes, said the writer. How can we secure solidarity from the European nations at a time when we have deep differences with one another, he asked. The writer said it is indeed frustrating to see the Israelis totally disregarding the Arab feelings at a time when Arab states have concluded peace treaties with the Jewish state or opened and continue to open offices for Israel's trade missions in the Arab World. The Arabs, added the writer, should rally their ranks and decide, once and for all, whether to attain peace for the exchange of land or reimpose total boycott of Israel and an end to all links with the Jewish state until that goal has been achieved.

The View from Academia

Truths and assumptions in the world of education

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

IN THE world of education, just as in life in general, we assume a lot. Naturally, some of these assumptions turn out to be apt, perceptive and correct. Some, however, turn out to be either inaccurate or totally false.

The other day, I was browsing through the library and found a book about higher education in America, "Vision and Purpose in Higher Education." The book, published by the American Council on Education, was written in the sixties, which was a crucial decade in American education, a decade in which many assumptions were subjected to meticulous scrutiny and many radical changes were introduced.

In many ways, the decade of the sixties in America bears striking similarities to the nineties in our part of the world, especially when it comes to education. Many of the questions we have been raising with respect to educational reform (since the late eighties in particular) were raised and debated at length in the sixties. In addition, the sixties in America was a time when young men and women started joining the universities in large numbers. This is true in our part of the world also, as evident from the rapid increase of the number of students enrolled at our universities during the past decade and the rapid increase in the number of universities themselves.

One interesting chapter in the book introduces and rejects three important assumptions which many of us still ascribe to and cherish. The first has to do with the complex relationship between quality and quantity. The assumption among many, in the America of the sixties and in our society today, is that quality and quantity cannot go together. "In education, quality and quantity, like oil and water, do not mix." According to this assumption, the larger the educational institution is, and the larger the classes, the less outstanding the quality of the product (the students) is. "We can choose to educate a few people exceedingly well or to educate a larger number somewhat less well, but we cannot do both. And, since we cannot do both, we must concentrate our energies and our resources on the education of an intellectual elite."

In our part of the world, I have heard this same line of argument from many people. As has just been prefaced, many of our higher-education institutions, and many of our classes, are large. The complaint we hear often, from teachers and administrators alike, is: "How can you expect me to give you

the quality you want when I have so many students to teach? Give me fewer students, they go on, and I give you Harvard-calibre students."

The book proves such perception to be inaccurate and false. While recognising size as a factor to be taken into account, it ascribes the greater weight when it comes to the distinction and excellence of an institution not to its size, but to the quality of teaching or instruction. "It is as easy to get poor teaching in a small institution as it is to get it in a large one." Rather than seeking a low teacher-student ratio, the educational institution should devote its efforts to recruiting able teaching faculty members or upgrading the skills of its existing teaching staff. Inspiring teachers inspire excellence no matter what. I believe that there is a great deal of truth in this.

The second assumption has to do with what we often refer to ambiguously and loosely as students' "intelligence" or "ability." Such assumption is also widespread in our part of the world. Many of us, and most of the time on the basis of scholastic achievement alone, draw lines between good students and bad students, students with outstanding abilities and those with poor abilities, bright students and average students, etc. "The most dangerous of all of these prejudices... is the one that equates quality in education with the IQ of the student — the brighter the student, the better the education."

Such an assumption is false for two reasons. The first is, as we have come to realise over the years, that all students are outstanding, but in different ways. There is probably no one on earth who is excelling in everything, but each has the potential to excel in one or more things.

The other day, I was talking to some of our students in Arabic. I usually speak with them in English in the lecture hall. Among them was a student whose English is generally below average. When he spoke in Arabic, he was very impressive, profound and "intelligent." Had I judged his character on the basis of his performance in English, I would have thought him to be simple-minded and shallow.

Excellent education then is that which caters to the various needs of the students, that which recognises individual differences and which attempts to bring out the best in each student. This can be done even in large classes, as long as we realise the need for us as teachers and institutions to devise

ways and approaches and diversify our methods of communication with the aim of reaching out not to the "ideal" student in the class (i.e. the abstract image in our heads of what an excellent student is) but the ideal in each and every student.

The second reason is that excellence is not measured on the basis of the student's innate qualities but on the basis of the progress he/she makes. Most often, we evaluate our students on the basis of their abilities and the performance which live up to our expectations at a particular moment. We rarely take the student's case history into account. We rarely measure the progress and the development he/she has made over time. "Quality in education must surely be measured by the student's progress, rather than by his inherent intellectual equipment." Good education then is education which facilitates progress in a student's performance and good evaluation is evaluation which measures such progress accurately. It is no secret that many teachers, at the school and university levels, form judgements about their students' abilities and intelligence early on and stick to such judgements adamantly. By doing this, they not only affect the student's psyche negatively but obstruct and block any progress that he/she may make. This is bad.

The third assumption is that the public school is necessarily inferior to the private school. Such (mis)conception is widespread in our society. This may be true to an extent, and there are reasons to justify it at this point in time. However, on the basis of what we have said under the first and second assumptions (that large institutions can be excellent and that all individuals have the potential to excel), this should not be necessarily the case. A change of attitude is required here. If we think in our heart of hearts that our public institutions are inferior to the private ones, then they will be inferior. If, on the other hand, we believe that they can be equal or even better, then we will do our best to make such a conception come true.

Assumptions can be false, especially when, as in the world of education, we deal with a human commodity. Students are complex, rich and dynamic beings who surprise you in ways you may never anticipate. Let's test our assumptions every once in a while, rigorously and meticulously.

Unadorned detail: Gaza after Oslo

By Dr. Clare Brandt

IN THE Jordan Times, Feb. 23, Edward Said recommends that we inform ourselves of the actual conditions of life for the Palestinians at this stage of the "peace" process, "unadorned and in the greatest detail," and to speak out about the suffering in the loudest possible voice. Accordingly, having visited Gaza during the recent semester break, I wish to share my impressions.

The most appalling aspect of the Gaza scene is its isolation. I kept encountering the devastation wrought at many levels of life by the restrictions on travel. Because there are no buses (except for the IDF and the Thai workers) and no regular service taxis, it is extremely expensive to get to Gaza and back, certainly from the bridge and, I suspect, from everywhere else.

One notable change struck me at the Erez checkpoint itself: last April 1996, when I entered Gaza, the atmosphere was very tense because it was shortly after the series of suicide bus bombings which resulted in a prolonged total closure of Gaza. At that time, there were three checkpoints, two Israeli and one Palestinian. Since I was the only person for hundreds of yards, I was aware of only a single track for entry at the second Israeli checkpoint. My luggage was searched minutely, and I was questioned extensively about my reasons for entering Gaza. When I told the Israeli soldier that I was looking into a teaching position with Reverend Dabbagh of the Middle East Council of Churches, he asked quizzically if I was a religious woman. Oh yes, I replied, if we don't believe in God we're in big trouble. He replied very seriously: "Even if we believe in God we're in big trouble."

This struck me as so ironic and so incongruous that I had to exercise great self-control to keep from laughing hysterically, or alternatively engaging him in a theological discourse which could have had only one result: his refusing to let me enter Gaza. Long ago I had tattooed in invisible ink across my forehead: "Proceed with caution: the consciousness you raise may be your own." What self control! I was dying to tell him about the Book of Samuel and how I regarded Israel as a criminal settler state, worse than South Africa at the worst of its apartheid past. "Aren't you ashamed?" I wanted to ask him. As it was I picked up my authorisation, all stamped and validated, and just as I turned away, biting my tongue, he said: "Good luck with the Bishop," which really almost cracked me up. "Thank you very much," I muttered. But I would like to have talked to

him: he seemed troubled by his position, unlike most of the arrogant or bored IDF functionaries I encountered.

This time, towards the end of Ramadan, in 1997, there were many vehicles in the parking lot and a few more people in evidence. At the second Israeli checkpoint, I was directed to a "VIP" entrance where my luggage was X-rayed but not searched and my entry was very quick. However, as I looked across at the other, non-VIP entrance, I caught a glimpse of a Palestinian woman in traditional dress standing over three or four suitcases which had been ransacked, the clothing and other belongings scattered in a chaotic pile at her feet, her arms lifted in a gesture of dismay. The Israelis do not consider Palestinians VIPs.

When I was leaving Gaza six days later, I decided to try to catch a ride with any VIP who was leaving. I stopped by the Marna House Hotel to ask whether there might be a foreign press delegation or anyone travelling back to Jerusalem or to the bridge. It seemed logical on this, the day after the meeting between Arafat and Netanyahu on the 9th — postponed from several days earlier because of the helicopter crash. There was not a car in the hotel parking lot and not a soul in the lobby; except for Aliya Shawwah — she was alone. She seemed gloomy, not her usual hospitable self.

From there I went to see Constantine Dabbagh. He too was alone but he seemed delighted to see us, invited us for coffee, and was most forthcoming about the situation. From him I learned more about the long-term effects of the closure of Gaza. There are students from Gaza who graduated from Al Najah, in Nablus, four years ago and have not been able to return to their families. Of course this is true for those who graduated later as well; and there are many students who should be going from Gaza to Nablus, to Birzeit or to Bethlehem but who cannot get authorisation to leave Gaza to go study. Bishop Dabbagh himself has a daughter who has been studying at Bethlehem University for one year and they have not seen her in that time. I mentioned Father Michael Prior, now on sabbatical and teaching at Bethlehem University. Bishop Dabbagh had not met him — had not heard of him. I mentioned the Jerusalem Day conference that I had attended in Amman last October, at which Father Prior, Dr. Thomas Thompson, John Quigley and many others spoke. He did not know about that either. I used to think that when Americans and other activists go to Jerusalem, they also visit Gaza. Now, it seems,

if that used to be the case, it is no longer because it is just too difficult to get to Gaza.

On the health side the effects are also drastic. One resident of a camp I met needs eye surgery — he has had a tiny piece of a child's fingernail lodged in his eyeball for months, yet he cannot get a permit to go to Jerusalem for treatment and he is fearful of having it done in Gaza. His baby daughter has a congenital eye problem: her right eye deviates inward and cannot focus. This may be fairly simple to correct, but they cannot get a permit to take her to Jerusalem. Her whole personality and learning process is no doubt suffering, and I was told that she is one of hundreds of people who need such medical treatment and cannot obtain it because they cannot travel. It is now necessary to get permits from both the PNA and the Israelis to travel, a double bind.

For purposes of study, research or communication, the effects of travel restrictions are also extremely negative. One student I met wants to submit a research paper for a Fulbright project on democracy, centred in Ramallah. He cannot go to Ramallah to confer with the staff. A recent issue of Journal of Palestine Studies (JPS) carried a splendid article about the problems involved in the democratisation of the Palestinian community by a professor on the staff of Al Najah University. The student would like to visit him to get information and materials, but he cannot travel.

I had been informed at the Palestine embassy in Amman that there are now buses between the bridge and Gaza for Palestinians. It turns out that you have to ask for a travel permit far in advance, then, if you are selected (it might be days or weeks later or never), you have to watch for your number to be flashed on the TV screen the night before you are authorised to take a seat on a bus from Gaza to the bridge.

One of my colleagues at Al Isra University is from Khan Yunis. I had hoped to travel with him between semesters, partly because I needed help carrying two large suitcases of clothing and other supplies which I have been gathering from Bahrain, Chicago and Jordan, and partly because I wanted the advantage of an Arabic speaker to negotiate the travel arrangements: on my previous visit last April, I paid over JD 200 just for taxi fares to and from the bridge, and I hoped that a native speaker of Arabic would help me find cheaper passage. Though he had applied weeks ahead through his uncle in Gaza City for an Israeli permit to travel to Gaza, it failed to arrive in time. He was prevented from seeing his family, and I was

forced to go without him. I managed to take a service taxi to Jerusalem which then took me solo to Gaza for JD 50.

On the way back, I found Israeli taxis cruising through the parking lot outside the Erez checkpoint, asking for an arm and a leg for transport. I became so frustrated that I finally lost control and stood in the middle of the parking lot screaming at the top of my voice in between sobs: "No! I don't want to go to Tel Aviv and I don't want to go to Ashkelon. I'm not a bloody tourist and I don't like highway robbery." Finally, a Jerusalem Arab driver rescued me, got me to Jerusalem and found me a service taxi going to Jericho. I had to take a taxi from Jericho to the bus station (it costs ten shekels just to drive into the bus station), and take a bus from there the short distance to the bridge, and then take a bus across the bridge and then take a taxi from that side to Amman. I was short a few dinars and offered that last driver my earnings as part of the fare — which he gallantly refused and took me to my door. No wonder people don't go to Gaza — it is just too wearing and too expensive.

There is a fairly big difference, judging from my rather cursory view, between Khan Yunis and Gaza City. As we were moving around Gaza City, trying to arrange for my travel back to Jordan, we saw small parks with little merry-go-rounds and rather pathetic little ferris wheels with children playing and families enjoying the last day of the Eid holiday. Khan Yunis lacks any such parks. Quite a lot of building is going on in Gaza City — some of the Palestinian National Authority ministries have fancy headquarters and, I am told, very impressive houses — which provides construction jobs for a limited number of Palestinians.

A five-star hotel is taking shape in Gaza City, and I have heard that there will soon be a fast-food American-style restaurant — is it to be MacDonald's? I forget which one, but any one will look like an obscenity to me. The unemployment rate is still shocking: the big industry is security forces work, and apparently these people do not always get paid — perhaps never, judging by the appalling conditions in the family of the one person I actually met who was working for one of the several special security groups. One of his little girls, otherwise a beauty, has front teeth that lack enamel coating and are incompletely erupted (she is about five) for lack of calcium.

Everyone I talked to expressed in different ways a sense of fear and the loss of community spirit since Oslo. You never know which of your

neighbours is being paid to report on you, they said, and you find people who were yesterday in the same financial position as yourself suddenly driving expensive cars and building villas. Such perceived discrepancies have brought about an erosion of the sense of common purpose which sustained these communities during the worst years of occupation and the bitter sacrifices of the Intifada.

A few years ago, young men and women of Gaza (even at tender ages they could no longer be called boys and girls during the Intifada) risked being shot dead by the IDF to write on the walls the time and places of kindergarten and adult literacy classes. Now there are kindergartens, yet on my latest visit I saw children having to stay home from school who had been proudly attending kindergarten only last year; with many fathers out of work, there is simply no money for the luxury of schooling. Aside from the "development" of Gaza, years of Israeli occupation have left the shameful legacy of having raised the illiteracy level of a people traditionally the best educated and most book-loving of any in the Middle East. What is most shocking is the consensus of world opinion which even now condones the criminal dispossession by which these people, who a few years ago had land, orchards, stone villas in villages and towns, have become "throw-away people," for whom cinder-block houses or tents at the margin of the sea are good enough.

To me perhaps the most telling reflection on the situation in Gaza was the fact that of the 31 women prisoners released from Israeli prisons, the one from Gaza (who was in for drugs offences, though I hasten to add that no one should assume that she was guilty — perhaps falsely accused or in some way a victim) elected to remain in prison rather than be repatriated to Gaza for fear of her reception at home.

On the road between Latrun and the Erez checkpoint, we passed a number of large, comfortable looking houses, obviously abandoned and empty, scattered along this fertile plains area. I asked the Palestinian driver about the people who one lived there. They had been driven out in 1948, he said; most went to Gaza. "All this land is stolen."

One very important positive development: the rat population in Khan Yunis is under control. I did not see any rats on the last visit, in contrast with last April when I saw huge lumbering sauntering grey beasts travelling about in broad daylight, and heard them rustling in the kitchen at night when I went to the bath-

room. I was told that the PNA has got rid of the rats. I have the feeling, though, that like the IDF, they may have just pulled back a bit, and may be waiting for a fresh assault just down the road. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of sickness in the camps: one case originally diagnosed as typhoid was later said to be something else. But the problems of unheated houses, malnutrition and poor sanitation remain.

Another positive note: the IDF are no longer right in the Palestinians' houses, and the family I visited now turn their TV up to a normal volume without fear of attracting the attention of the IDF stationed on the roof-top above. But only about one-third of the army has actually left Gaza. I am told: the rest is "redeployed" along the roads and on the beach. Oh yes, I should mention the beach. Even in the worst days of 1981 to 1984 when I visited Khan Yunis, if they could not afford to buy meat they could take a little boat out and fish. Now, the big settlement nearby is protected by a heavy military presence and few people still have boats: the IDF burnt many of them over the years, and some people who do brave the sea to fish find themselves shot at by IDF patrols, even when they are supposedly in allowed areas.

I think the isolation of Gaza is partly the function of the naive view people have in the U.S. and Europe that now, that there is peace, everything is just fine. Well, in my view Gaza is pacified, not peaceful: some Palestinians are in Israeli prisons while others are in Palestinian prisons. I heard some despairing comments about the unfulfilled hopes they had invested in the elections. However, it is regarded as a very positive sign that the president listened to his elected parliament in his arrest of the security chief in Nablus, after the death of Yusef Bahar after torture in a Palestinian prison. But Israeli confiscation of Palestinian land goes on apace. Great areas of land are being gobbled up for settlement expansion and for roads, among them the most expensive road in the Middle East which tunnels under a Palestinian village! The Bedouin are being violently dragged off their land near Jerusalem while the Israeli bulldozers speed up the preparations for more settlements. Edward Said says there is nothing in the Oslo accords to stop them.

Is this peace? Is it any better than war?

The writer is on the teaching staff at the English Department of Al Isra University. She contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

الدكتور احمد مجدوبه

Society on the Move

Royals make a date with the Danes

Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor are expected to make a state visit to Denmark late April at the invitation of Queen Margrethe II and Prince Henrik. The Danish queen had twice planned to come to Jordan last year, but unfortunate circumstances forced a change of plans both times. The first trip was cancelled because her husband, the Prime Consort, had fallen ill. The second, scheduled for early May, was put off due to the Israeli "Grapes of Wrath" operation in South Lebanon and the subsequent Dana massacre in which more than 100 innocent Lebanese were killed by Israeli fire.



Lars Blinkenberg

Queen Margrethe was to have visited Israel following the Jordan visit. That one too was cancelled. Here in Amman this week to make arrangements for the Royal visit to Copenhagen was Danish Ambassador to Syria, Jordan and Lebanon Lars Blinkenberg. Mr. Blinkenberg, a career diplomat with earlier ambassadorial postings to such large oil producing states as Venezuela and Nigeria, is scheduled to meet today with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf. The ambassador will discuss the goals and arrangements of the visit, to which the Danish government attaches great significance. With Dr. Khalaf, the ambassador will discuss economic aid loans to Jordan. Copenhagen has just earmarked about \$1.5 million for a waste conversion project to produce methane gas for Amman Municipality. There is said to be a scope for wider cooperation between the two countries, especially that Copenhagen views Jordan as an important player in the peace process, which Denmark fully supports. Denmark last month sponsored the Copenhagen Declaration to promote peace, among the peoples of the Arab and Israeli parties to the peace process. This is Mr. Blinkenberg's first assignment as an ambassador to the Middle East after a long and chequered career in the diplomatic service. A lawyer, he was in charge of the legal department in his ministry, where he also dealt with Nordic affairs. Before that he served in India, after which he wrote a book in Danish and English. A new edition of this book entitled, "India, Pakistan: The history of unresolved conflict," will appear soon. He took up his post in Damascus last July and has been working from there to strengthen relations with Lebanon and Jordan. He intimates that perhaps after the Royal visit to Denmark, wheels may start churning on establishing full diplomatic missions in both Amman and Copenhagen. For now he has had to do with one visit a month here, where he also meets with his counterparts from countries of the European Union, of which Denmark is an old member.

SARA'S RUN: Although Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Jordan last week may have been short, that did not stop his wife Sara from joining him. Mrs. Netanyahu was welcomed by Her Majesty Queen Noor, with whom the Israeli first lady had dinner. She also met with HRH Princess Sarvath Al Hassan, and was escorted by Fatima Kabariti, wife of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti. The Netanyahus, who were in Jordan together last August, did not bring their children though.

SHALOM, SHIMON: Israeli Ambassador Shimon Shamir and his wife Daniella, while somewhat torn between leaving their short posting in Amman and returning home to Tel Aviv, are no doubt looking forward to being close again to their own adult children. Professor of Modern Middle East History, Dr. Shamir will return to Tel Aviv University to pursue his work and teaching in his specialisation of political and intellectual history and Arab-Israeli relations. The ambassador, who obtained his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1961, was Israel's third ambassador to Egypt from 1988-1990. From 1992 to 1995, prior to his appointment to Amman, he headed the Tami Steinmetz Centre for Peace Research. Mrs. Shamir has been active in the Diplomatic Spouses Club and last March organised a trip to Palestine and Israel for about 15 of the club's members. Members of the Royal family, the diplomatic corps and senior officials continue to host luncheons and dinners in the Shamir's honour to say farewell. And the reception hosted by the minister of the embassy, Jacob Rosen, and his wife Annette at the ambassador's residence brought in several senior officials and members of the Royal family to

wish the Shamirs well. Still, between the hectic pace of farewell events, the diplomatic couple themselves Monday evening hosted a reception for Arab-Israeli students studying at Jordanian universities.

The departure of Prof. Shamir was expected with last year's election of a Likud-led government. Although Israeli embassy officials maintain that the ambassador's tenure was set for only two years, analysts believe that had Shimon Peres won the election and kept a Labour lead, we may have seen more of Prof. Shamir for a longer period. There was the possibility that he would delay his departure by at least several days when it was learned that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was invited to attend the opening of the Rabin Peace Centre at Tel Aviv University. But that visit was reported in the media Wednesday as not about to materialise. So it appears Prof. Shamir will leave on schedule in early March at the latest.

WHAT TO EXPECT: Prof. Shamir's successor, Oded Eran is a career diplomat. His most recent assignment was state-side as deputy director general for economic affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as head of Israel's delegation to the Multilateral Economic Development Working Group (REDWG). From 1987-1990 he was deputy chief of mission at Israel's embassy in Washington. In the early 80's he was also in the U.S. capital working Capitol Hill as his embassy's counsellor for Congressional Relations. His home base assignments usually involved Middle East affairs. Dr. Eran served from 1962-1966 in the Israeli army. Born in Tel Aviv in 1941, the ambassador-designate graduated from Hebrew University in Oriental and political sciences and obtained his Ph.D. from the London School of Economics. His wife Micki will not be joining him in Amman as she holds a senior post at the Central Bank of Israel. The Eran's have three children. Press reports that Dr. Eran appointed here because he is an economist brought a brief glint to some entrepreneurs' eyes; they were hoping joint ventures would abound. What kind of job he will do here remains to be seen.

LINKING LIBERALS: In a letter to the editor published in the Jordan Times the day following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Amman, the author wrote in support of those criticising Mr. Netanyahu's policies, as far as they affect the peace process. That writer, Jacob Bender, is Executive Director of American Friends of Meretz, an organisation of about 8,500 Jews in the U.S. and Canada who "support the Arab-Israeli peace process" and oppose Israeli policies such as the opening of the Jerusalem tunnel near Haram Al Sharif and the proliferation of settlements. Meretz, of course, is a coalition of three left-wing and liberal parties who always advocated peace with the Arabs. Mr. Bender headed a team of 15 of the organisation's members on a 10-day visit to Palestine and Israel. Nine of the group made the visit to Jordan to, as Mr. Bender, a New York based executive, said, "get educated on the recent events in the region." In Gaza, the group, which was top heavy in terms of representatives from the legal profession, met with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. While in Jordan, for two days, they attempted to obtain a sense of how Jordanians feel about the peace process. They were received by His Majesty King Hussein, met with members of the press, and were hosted at a dinner by Jordanian businesspersons. Established seven years ago, with offices today in New York and other major North American cities, American Friends of Meretz, claims to advance the philosophy of democracy within Israeli society and also educate Americans about the Meretz party. The group's members are linking with other like-minded Jewish organisations in the U.S., by at least sharing the same offices, in order to pool efforts for bringing about real, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

AT HER OWN REQUEST: At the German embassy, Press and Cultural Attaché Ingrid Liedgens has had her tenure in Amman extended. Mrs. Liedgens who will have been in Jordan six full years by the time her extension is up is quite pleased because she herself had requested the extension. She has made many friends and associates throughout the country in Jordanian as well as foreign circles. Her efforts are evident in several arenas, and two additional years on the job should see mutual benefits.

NPR SCOUTS: The media may be welcoming someone new to Amman, provided Amman, and not Cairo, is the choice of the folks at the Washington, D.C.-based National Public Radio (NPR). In town last week to scout out the convenience of Amman as the base for NPR's coverage of the Arab World, were NPR Foreign Editor Loren Jenkins and Jerusalem Correspondent Eric Wiener. The station maintained a bureau in Cairo which is being shut down as its correspondent, Sunny Khaled, returned to work in the U.S. on the cultural desk of NPR. Mr. Jenkins was Middle East bureau chief for Newsweek in Beirut and later covered the region for the Washington Post, whose publishers happen to



The Upper Austrian Wind Soloists Tuesday night perform at City Hall

own Newsweek as well. He was to see several people connected with the official and private media, including Minister of Information Dr. Murwaa Muasher, whom Mr. Jenkins said he did not have an opportunity to meet when Dr. Muasher was director of the Jordan Information Bureau in Washington. Whether the choice is Amman or Cairo, the office will comprise only one correspondent, as does the Jerusalem office, but this one is meant to cover important news throughout the Arab World.

DEMOCRATIC LOOK AT DEMOCRACY: Al Kutba Institute for Human Development and Konrad Adenauer Foundation are teaming up with the General Federation of Jordanian women to run a series of workshops over the next several months leading up to the general elections on "The Role of Jordanian Women in Democracy and the 1997 Elections." The workshops, the first of which will conclude today in Aqaba, are moderated by Ellen Kettaneh Khouri, director of Al Kutba, organised and supervised by psychologist Josi Salem-Pickart, and advised by Nadia Bushnaq, a women's activist who last time ran unsuccessfully for Parliament for a seat in Zarqa. The workshops introduce participants to the basis of democracy and pluralism and explain "why we vote." The lectures talk about accountability and transparency and build up to details about the electoral system and the duties and rights of deputies. They ask whether the system is democratic, what are its weak and strong points, and what should women seek from it. According to Ms. Khouri, there is no electioneering, no endorsing, but rather the events are an attempt to foster independent thinking and voting, all to advance causes of the country and therein help women. The 50 participants to each series of workshops are gleaned from various women's organisations and their branches around the Kingdom. At the end of each workshop the organisers ask the participants to critique the experience. They believe that the workshop themselves are a demonstration of democracy at work, geared to satisfying the needs of the women. At the end of all four workshops the organisers will hold a national conference gathering all 200 participants, plus officials to debate issues the women have come up with during the workshops. This will help them in identifying how to work as an individual and group lobby, said Ms. Khouri. The three remaining workshops are scheduled for April 1, 2 and 3 in Karak; May 5, 6 and 7 in Irbid; and July 1, 2, 3 in Zarqa. The national conference is to convene on September 17 and 18 at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman. Lectures include Deputy Toujan Faisal and Khadija Habashneh Abu Ali.

NATIONAL DAY FOCUS: Two Muslim states, Kuwait and Brunei celebrated national days this week. For Kuwait, which hosted a reception the same night as the Israelis did on Tuesday for outgoing Ambassador Shimon Shamir, there were many advertisements in daily Arabic papers from Jordanian merchants and entrepreneurs congratulating the Gulf state. Although full diplomatic relations have not yet been restored as ambassadors have not been exchanged, the turnout, which included Prime

Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, was said to be good, with some movement between the Kuwaiti and Israeli receptions. Brunei's Ambassador to Cairo Pehin Daro Huji Sulaiman and his wife hosted their reception at the Regency Palace Hotel in Amman. This is the first such event for Brunei in Jordan. Attending were ambassadors and senior government officials.

MIXING MEDICOS: The newly formed Association of Doctors Graduated from Spain and Spanish-Speaking Countries held their first meeting last Friday to elect their officers. Heading the group of medical specialists is Dr. Madallah Ma'ayah, doctor of internal and chest medicine. The executive committee is made up of General Practitioner Dr. Khaled Shaban, Endocrinologist Dr. Ahmad Dabour, General Practitioner Dr. Nofan Ma'ayah, Anaesthesiologist Dr. Ibrahim Khasawneh, rheumatology and rehabilitation specialist Dr. Ibrahim Qaqish, and Dermatologist Dr. Ghassan Khouri. According to Dr. Ma'ayah, since 1968 more than 600 Jordanians have graduated from medical schools in Spain. Spain and Jordan maintained strong cultural ties, and thousands of Jordanian students received undergraduate and graduate degrees in various fields from universities throughout Spain, especially in the 70s. Many of these students were on scholarships provided jointly by the Jordanian and Spanish governments. When these students returned home, many were not just arriving with diplomas; a good number repatriated with foreign spouses. The new association will seek to strengthen ties between the medical spheres in Jordan and Spain.

WOODWINDS & WOODWORK: The Upper Austrian Wind Soloists Tuesday night performed at City Hall. This is the second such cultural event organised by the Amman Municipality in its new JD 2 million edifice in the old part of Amman. The first was a lecture by Saudi novelist, who was born in Amman and lives in Syria, Abdul Rahman Munif. City Hall was inaugurated by Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on the occasion of the King's birthday. All but the woodwork has been completed; that part should be done in two more months. Another building for staff, expected to cost JD 5 million and encompass 20,000 square metres, is scheduled for completion in one year. The compound will also house a museum and cultural centre and will be located in Saqq El Sail, which lies at the foot of the Abdoun mountain but is very close to the downtown area. Tuesday's concert was held under the patronage of Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi and in cooperation with Noor Al Hussein Foundation/The National Music Conservatory, the Austrian embassy, and Raddison SAS Hotel Amman (still being called the Philadelphia Hotel). Attending were Their Royal Highnesses Prince Raad Bin Zeid and Princess Majda, Hind Nasser and members of the diplomatic corps in Amman with their families and many Jordanian music aficionados. Last but not least, the Ladies Of Ikebana Club provided the flower arrangements.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Study: Boys and girls see risk differently

By Ira Dreyfuss
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Barbara Morrongiello tells about the boy who climbed onto a garage roof to retrieve a ball.

"His mother said, 'don't you realise you can fall?'" Morrongiello said. "The boy said, 'well, but I might not.'"

To the Canadian psychologist, the incident illustrates how boys think — which, according to Morrongiello, is different from how girls think.

Boys are more likely to see if the benefit is worth the risk, but to underestimate the risks, said Morrongiello, a professor at the University of Guelph in Ontario. Girls tend to base their decisions on

whether they could be hurt at all, she said. This difference in attitude helps to explain why boys are two to four times more likely than girls to get hurt, she said.

Morrongiello and her colleagues looked at risk assessments among 290 6-year-old to 10-year-old boys and girls in Ontario schools. The students were shown drawings of children biking or on playground equipment and were asked their beliefs about the likelihood and severity of possible injuries.

Eighty per cent of the time, she could tell which sex the child was, based on the attitude toward injury, Morrongiello said. She presented her findings at recent meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development.

Boys were less likely to say they would get hurt,

and also less likely to think an injury would be severe. "And boys tended to explain their injuries as more due to bad luck than the girls did," Morrongiello said.

Boys won't consider avoiding a risky situation unless they think there is a strong potential for injury, while girls will consider avoiding it if there is any potential, Morrongiello said. And in these psychological calculations, an activity that a boy considers fun may be worth a little risk of getting hurt, she said.

The findings come as no surprise to researcher Li-cette Peterson, a psychology professor at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

In Peterson's study, children rode exercise bikes while watching a video of a bike ride, shot from an

over-the-handlebars, biker's-eye perspective. She tested the reaction times of the children to hazards ranging from running over a garden hose to running head-on into a car.

"Girls brake sooner," Peterson said. "They tell us they are more fearful and they anticipate more pain if they are injured. Injuries are more of a negative event to them than to the boys."

Why girls are more fearful is not known. It could be a genetic tendency, the result of social conditioning, or a combination of the two, Peterson said.

Morrongiello's findings might help explain why many girls drop out of athletics, while a few continue, commented Robert Malina, director of the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports in East Lansing, Michigan.

It might well be that boys in general are more adventuresome, Malina said. "Having been a boy once, unless it was something that kept you in bed, why stop playing?"

However, the gender differences are not absolute. Some girls have a greater tolerance of risk than some boys, Morrongiello said.

And the findings should not be taken as an excuse for some kids to avoid adventuresome play, including sports, said Greg Welk, director of childhood and adolescent health at the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research in Dallas.

It may well be that encouraging a child to be competent at an activity will reduce the anxiety, Welk said. And some healthful activities, such as walking and biking, are low risk, he said.

To know is not enough

By Jean-Claude Elias

MOST DISCIPLINES and professions, whether they belong to the domain of art, sport, science, literature, or other, require the "student" to go through two well-known, distinct phases: Theory and practice. It is also well-known that the importance, the dose, the ratio of each such phase over the other varies tremendously from one discipline to another. A long distance runner for example has obviously much more to do in the second phase — practice that is — than say a mathematician would. Where do we put a PC user in all that? What is the importance of practice for a computer lover?

What is interesting in using computers is that each of us can take it as far as he can or wants. There is so much to know, so many different programmes to use that nobody can pretend knowing even a quarter or one tenth of what is available. Not even professionals. Nowadays when you need in-depth, specific assistance you talk to someone who is a specialist in one given computer domain: Accounting, data base, graphic design, engineering, desktop publishing, networks, etc. Rarely one can cover well more than one or two topics.

To make good use of a PC and a given software, one goes through the evident first learning phase. However, this is only a small step on the path to computer fluency. Like practising your backhand in tennis, like running 20 miles a day to prepare for a marathon, being good at computers is chiefly a matter of practice. New software is designed to be simple, easy to understand — and it is. Except in rare cases, all the new packages that run under the Windows operating system are intuitive and friendly to operate. On the other hand they include so many features, so many possibilities that understanding them is one thing, but remembering them and using them well certainly is

chip talk



another. When you receive or install a new programme in your computer, you usually spend a few hours discovering it, understanding its basic operation. But unless you use its functions over and over, almost on a daily basis, you'll easily forget how to do this or that. In the best case you'll be working very slowly with it, which defeats the purpose of using a PC. The system is meant to take you easily and quickly to wherever you want to go. Again, this requires practice.

I know of a few smart PC aficionados who have deliberately limited themselves to operating a few programmes — only those they would frequently need. Instead of being sluggish at tens of software titles, they become fast, efficient at four or five programmes. Experience has shown that an extremely limited number of people actually need or can make use of more than such a number of packages.

If one's aim is to explore, to have fun and to test software, then one can play around with as many programmes as one wishes. If the name of the game is to obtain professional, fast results, then regular, intensive practice with a selected number of titles is the smartest thing to do.

New games

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

IF YOU believe what you read in the papers, the three biggest problems of modern life are — who to hold on charges of slandering, whether discussions should continue on a possible Aqaba airport, and if the new play by Musa Hijazin is realistic enough or not.

May I suggest that none of these problems is worth the paper they are printed on, or at least that neither you nor I spend much time discussing them? Why? Because we sense that they are not real problems.

Today's real problems are elsewhere. We in this modern age have built up a whole new selection of problems which have never existed before, many of which we face everyday, and none of which ever hits the headlines.

Indeed, hardly any of them has ever been mentioned in a newspaper before. So today, I bring you a selection of these problems peculiar to our time.

How to avoid other people's umbrellas

An umbrella is a handy thing for keeping the rain off, but it is also a handy thing for getting tangled in, and until someone invents a flat-sided or bouncy umbrella, we will go on down the high street crashing into other umbrellas.

We are beginning to evolve some kind of rudimentary instinct to deal with this (a tall person lifts his umbrella, a short person goes under the tall person's umbrella), but it is not as sure-footed as our tackling of the next problem, which is...

How to manoeuvre a supermarket trolley without hitting the opposition

Over the years, we have learnt how to walk along crowded pavements without colliding very often into people coming the other way. Nobody knows how, but we have. And now we have started to evolve the same sort of



instinct in supermarkets while we walk with our trolleys. Nobody tells us to keep to the left or right, but by some sort of instinct, we tend to know which way the other person is heading and go the other way. Very often, it is the same person we avoided in the previous aisle and the one before that.

Actually, that is another problem — whether or not to smile at someone you have never met before, except just now in fresh vegetables, and again in toiletries, and again in the ice-cream section.

Modern living is also full of enforced waiting. We are told that it is non-stop action, but his is not so. A lot of modern life is spent in immobility and inactivity — while we are at a service station with the petrol nozzle in hand waiting for the car to fill up, or stand in a bank queue, or wait for red lights to change — but worst of all is waiting in a queue at a supermarket when you have chosen the slowest queue, and the people in front of you take so long to pack their purchases, and then can't find their cheque book, or the price tag has come off the pineapple, and the cashier has rung for the supervisor to come and help. A supervisor who hardly ever shows up.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, February 27, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:08 Ovide & The Gang & Raw Toonage (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Curiosity Show
- 3:00 They Came From Outer Space
- 4:00 N.B.A. Basketball
- 5:00 Out Of This World
- 5:30 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Parenthood
- 8:00 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
- 8:30 Babylon-5
- 9:10 Kung Fu-The Legend Continues
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Feature Film — The Boy Who Drank Too Much
- 12:00 Starring: Lance Kerwin & Ed Lauter

Friday, February 28, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:08 The Muppet Show
- 2:30 Flintstones
- 3:00 See How They Grow
- 3:15 French Programme
- 4:00 Crystal Maze
- 5:00 News Flash
- 5:10 Science & Space Encyclopedia
- 5:30 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 America's Funniest Home Videos
- 8:00 You Bet Your Life
- 8:30 Babylon 5 — Science Fiction
- 9:10 Frontline (Doc.)
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Crime Broker — Feature Film
- 12:00 Starring: Jacqueline Bisset + Masaya Kato

Saturday, March 1, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:08 Adventure of Mickey & Donald
- 2:30 Moomin (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programme
- 4:00 Gillette (Sports)
- 5:00 Practical Guide To The Universe (Doc.)
- 5:30 Tilt 23 1/2
- 5:35 Blue Heelers
- 6:00 French Programme
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Hanging With Mr. Cooper
- 8:00 Magazine — 01 (Doc.)
- 8:30 Prism
- 9:10 Lois & Clark — The New Adventures Of Superman
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 MacGyver
- 11:00 Feature Film — Fatal Bond
- Starring: Linda Blair + Jerome Ehlers

Sunday, March 2, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:08 Jonny Quest (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Problem Child (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programme
- 4:00 Global Family (Doc.)
- 4:30 Energy Express
- 4:50 Our World, Their World
- 5:15 Varieties and all our children
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
- 8:00 World Echo (Doc.)
- 8:30 Side Effects
- 9:10 Tycoons (Doc.)
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Hot Shots
- 11:00 Sisters

Monday, March 3, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Muppet Show
- 2:30 Captain Planet (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 Nature's Inventions
- 4:30 Deep Water Haven
- 5:00 Extra Dimensions (Doc.)
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Roseanne
- 8:00 Discover Magazine (Doc.)
- 8:30 Murder She Wrote
- 9:10 Extreme
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Under Suspicion
- 11:00 Hunter
- 12:00 Dad's Army

Tuesday, March 4, 1997

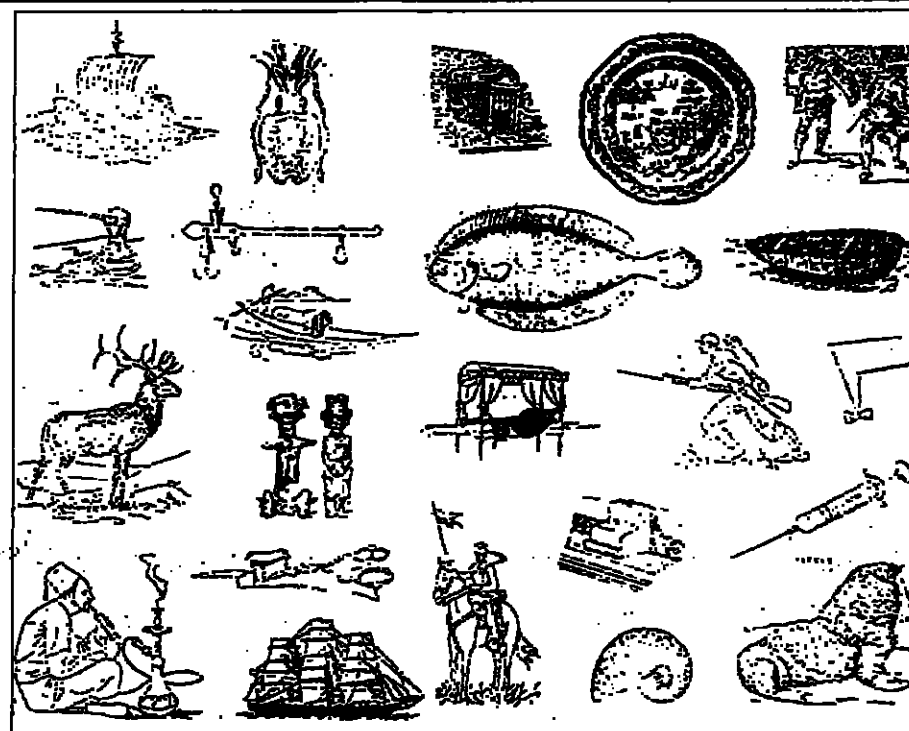
- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:08 Budgie — The Little Helicopter
- 2:30 Flintstones (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 Super Sport Follies
- 4:30 Dog House
- 5:10 Album Show
- 6:00 French Programme
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Murphy Brown
- 8:00 Super Stars Of Action (Bruce Willis)
- 8:30 Encounter
- 9:10 The Nature of Things
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Snowy River
- 12:00 Mission Impossible

Wednesday, March 5, 1997

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:08 The Muppet Show
- 2:30 Adventures On Rainbow Pond
- 3:00 French Programme
- 4:00 America's Funniest People
- 4:25 Escape from Jupiter
- (Space drama for children)
- 4:50 Challenge (Doc.)
- 5:15 Border Town
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Grace Under Fire
- 8:00 The Fifth Estate (Doc.)
- 9:10 Spencer For Hire
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Cobra
- 11:00 Hart To Hart

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Mohammad A. Shuqair



REFRESH YOUR MEMORY

Carefully examine the pictures here. Try to choose the word that best suits each picture. You are allowed only 3 minutes to brush your memory. There are 23 pictures. If you score more than 15, be sure that your memory is operating well. Hard luck if less than 10. You need to polish your memory.

Attempt, from now and then, to do more and more of our Memory Refreshers.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

** Can I see your identity card?
Hal astafi' an ara bitaqataq ash'shakhsyia?
Oreed tagh'yeer onwani.

** I've got another envelope.
Endi mazroof aakhar.

** I want some stamps to Sweden.
Oreed ha'd at'tawabie ela as-Suwaid.

** How do I get to hospital?
Kayfa ath'hab ela al-mustashfa?

** I've lost my driving licence.
Laqad faqad'tu rok'h'satal qiyadah.

** Where's your camera?
Ayna aalatu-tasweer?

** I've left it in the hotel.
Laqad taraktuha fil fondok.

** Why did you come here?
Limatha stayat ela hona?

** I've lost my way.
Laqad dalaltu at'tareeq.

** Would you be so kind as to tell me how to reach my hotel?
Hal tatakarram watokhbironi kayfa asel ela fondok?

** With great pleasure. Just phone No....
Bikolli soroor. It'tasel fakat biraqam....

LAUGH-IT-OFF

• A GROUP of people were looking at a little boy. "He's quite similar to his mother," said one of them. "Eh, his mother, a male or a female!"

• An idiot was once asked. "What did Mr. X do?" "He has died." "What did his wife inherit?" "Five girls!"

• A fool wanted to offer a gift for an army commander

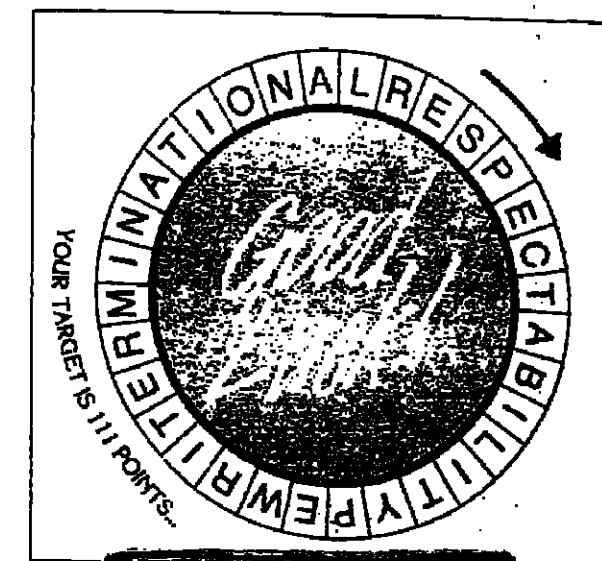
BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. On what day of the Creation did God make the sun, Moon and stars?
2. Edda is the name given to two important collections of literature, of which country?
3. Timbuktu was founded in 1807. Whereabouts is it?
4. What are blue brindles, headers, fletons, and common reds?
5. In medieval times what was the Mangonel used for?

PUZZLES

RINGO

HOW MANY words of three or more letters can you find in the ring? All words must run consecutively. Each letter may form part of more than one word. Give yourself a point for every letter in each word that you find. Wish you good luck.



Handwritten signature: محمد الشوقير

Silver screen Deng fears he will be typecast

By Scott Hillis
Reuters

BEIJING — An actor who played Deng Xiaoping in a recent movie release says he wants to avoid being typecast in the golden role now that the Chinese patriarch has exited the earthly stage.

Beijing actor Shi Xin debuted as the late paramount leader in *Battles For Glory Over Taihang Mountains*, an action-packed tale of the diminutive ruler's World War II exploits which premiered in December.

Since then he has been offered Deng roles in five other films. "My teachers, classmates and friends all say I'm going to get stuck in this one role," Shi, 25, told Reuters.

"I don't think that's right. If the day comes that I can play another role, I will be hardworking and earnest in my acting," Shi said.

Deng, one of Chinese communism's greatest revolutionaries as well as its most spectacular reformer, died aged 92 last Wednesday. That was also Shi's 25th birthday.

"At first I really didn't believe it," Shi said. "I feel connected to him in some way."

Plucked from the Central Drama Institute at age 23 to act the part of Deng, Shi said he found it tough to play the pint-sized patriarch, who despite his larger-than-life status as China's de facto emperor stood just 150 cm (five feet) tall.

"Deng Xiaoping was an



Twenty-five-year-old Chinese actor Shi Xin poses in front of a poster of the late Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping in Beijing. Shi, who played Deng Xiaoping in his 20's in a recent movie *Battles For Glory Over Taihang Mountains*, says he wants to avoid being typecast in the golden role now that the Chinese patriarch has exited the earthly stage (Reuters photo)

incredible, a great man," Shi said. "So when I got this role my heart was very heavy."

"To make the transition to playing such a great man was very difficult and gave me a lot of pressure, because I am so young," Shi said.

"My biggest challenge was losing weight," the 170-cm (5 ft 8 inch) Shi

think I lacked a lot," he said, but added that the complexity of Deng's persona could entice him into future films.

"Deng Xiaoping is not an average character. Playing him is something I will work on my whole life," he said.

Released last December, *Battles For Glory* failed even to recoup its shooting costs of just nine million yuan (\$1.08 million), one-ninth of which came from central government coffers, said director Qin Yan.

Qin said she hoped Deng's death would rekindle interest in the man who helped lead the Communist Party to victory in 1949 and whose reforms sparked one of the fastest economic booms the world has seen.

Beijing had ordered cinemas across China to interrupt their normal fare of Hong Kong kung fu films and Hollywood blockbusters and instead roll over six films about Deng, including *Battles For Glory*, Qin said.

"This film now has a mythological aspect to it," Qin said. "We can cherish his memory and remember him through this film."

Managers at several theatres in the capital were not so sure. They took Deng off their marquees in the face of poor customer response to tales of his exploits.

"We sold one ticket," one manager said, noting that the same films had been running almost continuously on television since Deng's death was announced.

"For the filming I didn't eat any staple foods. I mostly ate tomatoes and cucumbers."

To prepare for the most important role of his career, Shi holed up in a classroom where he pored over books and photo albums to glean every detail about Mr. Deng's life and times.

"Although everyone felt I did a pretty good job, I still

China's top-selling artist comes home for show

By Graham Earnshaw
Reuters

SHANGHAI — Chen Yifei, China's top-selling modern artist, is back home in Shanghai, basking in the glow of his international success and planning a shift in subject matter — this time to illustrate China's Generation X.

The artist, best known for his almost photographic paintings of Chinese beauties, opened his first-ever retrospective exhibition in December in the new Shanghai Museum.

The show, which ran through to Jan. 19 before going on tour to other cities, is Chen's first exhibition in China.

It brings together more than 40 works from a variety of public and private

sources, including drawings from Chen's youth during the 1960s Cultural Revolution, through to his latest paintings depicting the strong faces of Tibetan peasants.

But his next artistic goal is to capture on canvas the feel of Chinese urban youth in the mid-1990s, increasingly influenced by trends and concepts from beyond the borders of China, particularly Western culture.

"I want to do something on the life of the new generation, the ones I see dancing at the Hard Rock Cafe or New York New York (a Shanghai disco)," Chen said in an interview.

"This is a new generation of China after the revolution. I look at them and I think about the value of life."

They look very happy, but maybe thinking a different way," he said.

Chen holds the record for the highest price paid at auction for a modern Chinese painting — 2.86 million yuan (\$344,000) for a Tibetan-themed painting called *Wind of the mountain village*, now owned by a Chinese securities firm.

Now 50 years old, Chen left China in 1980, the first mainland Chinese artist to emigrate to the United States in modern times.

But in spirit and in terms of artistic inspiration, he never really left.

His most famous paintings so far are a series of life-like portraits of Chinese women dressed in traditional garb, while his paintings reflecting the atmosphere of

old Shanghai are well-known.

He continues to produce landscapes showing the canals and villages of the east China region that is his ancestral home and looking at his Tibetan portraits, you can almost smell the yak butter.

China is also at the heart of his other artistic interest — making movies. In recent years, he has directed several movies with mixed commercial success but he says he is determined to press on with this branch of the visual arts.

He is currently working on three film projects, the first of which will be a documentary on the Jews who lived in Shanghai in the years before the Communist takeover.

Global film buyers look for hits at Berlin market

BERLIN (R) — Two European films have caused an early stir at the 10th Annual European Film Market that runs parallel to the Berlin Film Festival, and buyers at one of the year's most important gatherings expect another vintage year.

The Franco-Georgian film *A Chef In Love* and a Norwegian film, *The Other Side Of Sunday*, soared to the top of the lists for hundreds of international film purchasers here after both received Academy Award nominations for best foreign film.

"The Oscar nominations are a huge boon for the films," said Beki Probst, director of the market where international rights for nearly 400 films from 50 countries are being bought and sold. "The screening rooms were bursting at the seams."

While Hollywood and European stars at the 47th annual Berlinale bask in the limelight of crowds and enormous press coverage, hundreds of buyers for television networks and distributors around the world are busy hustling behind the scenes at the market.

Although barely noticed by the public, the European Film Market is the business nerve centre of the Berlin

nale. It is where many deals are started, stopped or completed.

It is a film bourse that can light up with excitement when a hot film turns up, "one that everyone thinks they have to have." That was the case in 1995 when a little-known, low-budget Cuban film called *Strawberry And Chocolate* was bid up to million-dollar levels by distributors from every major country.

"You can make hundreds of video copies of your film and send them to buyers everywhere around the world," Probst said. "Some people choose that route, but it is a complicated approach. It is easier to bring your film to the market here."

Aside from Cannes and Venice, Berlin's growing commercial centre is considered one of Europe's most important trading places for films, according to several buyers and sellers roaming the market in a three-storey building next to Zoo Palace where the festival is centred.

"Cannes is more spectacular and you might pay ten times as much to attract attention there," says an Italian film distributor looking to sell several medium-

budget productions.

The number of films presented at the Berlin market this year is up more than 10 per cent on 1996.

Apart from dozens of films from Scandinavia, Germany, Britain, Spain and the United States, international licence agreements for big French productions like Claude Berri's *Lucie Aubrac* and Christian de Chalonge's *Le Comedien* are also being sold in Berlin.

Some rights are sold painstakingly territory-by-territory while others are sold universally to a single distributor, who then has the job of finding the right buyers at the right price in each country.

"The market has its own rhythm, it is quite different from the festival," said Probst, who in the past 10 years has turned Berlin's European Film Market into a vital early-year stopping point for the film industry.

Although it is impossible to put figures on the total value of offers or on the final turnover, because deals are often not finalised until after the market ends, Probst is confident it will match countless buyers and sellers.

"I have a very good feel-

ing about this market when I see all the French, Spanish and Asian titles," she said.

Fewer than two dozen films at the 1997 market come from former Soviet-bloc countries, which once used Berlin as a major launching pad into Western markets.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, bringing turbulence to public film production in the former east bloc, these countries were quiet for several years, Probst said.

"This year, for the first time, I have the impression that the situation is improving," she added. There are films here from the Czech Republic, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Slovenia and Hungary.

Slovenia's state-owned film fund, for example, and Czech Television, one of the country's most important co-producers, have rented stands in Berlin for the first time.

"It is still better to have your film in the official competition than just here on the market," said Czech Television sales director Jarmila Svorcova, referring to the 25 films selected to compete for the Golden Bear Awards.

"But we are hoping for the best anyhow," she added.

Europe needs central film distributors, Valenti says

By Fiona Fleck
Reuters

BERLIN — The president of the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA) has defended U.S. film distributors' large market share in Europe, arguing it was a sign European distributors lacked international coordination.

Jack Valenti, visiting the Berlin Film Festival, told journalists that if the European film industry did not want U.S. firms to dominate distribution on the continent someone in Europe should create a pan-European film distribution company.

His remarks were in response to questions about an open letter addressed to him by French film producer Anatole Dauman, which argued that the U.S. film business threatened to wipe out independent national film industries in Europe.

"If you are a filmmaker in France you go to a distribu-

tor in France, Germany and Britain — but if you go to (a company like U.S.) Buena Vista you get your film distributed all over the world," Valenti said. He had not yet read the letter.

Buena Vista helped finance a new German comedy *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* which is tipped to be a big box-office hit in Germany, now the second largest market after the United States.

"Why is there no pan-European distribution company?" Valenti asked. "You're blaming the Americans for something over which they have no control."

Dauman's open letter appealing to the powerful MPAA that Valenti heads said there was a danger the European film market was becoming dominated by big-budget Hollywood films which had the advantage because of their expensive advertising.

He appealed to Valenti to recognise that "restrictive" measures were urgently needed to prevent this happening.

"Recognition (is needed) that when in certain moments a national film industry finds its existence threatened, cultural pluralism must be defended by measures which may in the short run be restrictive of free circulation of films," he said.

Dauman argued that cinema had the "right not to be judged by the single criterion of rapid return on investment."

European filmmakers are worried some national industries may die out because they cannot compete with the gloss, special effects and expensive advertising of Hollywood.

They also fear that under financial pressure the makers of experimental films who could develop into more mainstream and wide-

ly acclaimed filmmakers will be unable to survive.

Some filmmakers in smaller countries in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe have already started making films in the English language.

Valenti said that while he did not oppose tariffs added to the price of all cinema tickets, such as the 11 per cent levy in France, to create a fund to promote the national industry, he opposed selective levies slamming them as "discriminatory."

He said the most important criterion for box-office success was whether the film was good or not.

"If you make movies that a lot of people want to see, you do well. This is rallying cry of the new rising generation of filmmakers in the world, particularly in Europe, who are reaching out to audiences."

Astounding Star Wars rerelease may bring only limited lessons and impact

By Lynn Elber
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The unexpected box-office power of *Star Wars* should have competitors moaning the loss of moviegoers to a 20-year-old film.

And it could have them thinking about the potential of exploiting their own studio film libraries.

Not so fast on either count, say industry executives, exhibitors and observers.

Star Wars has enjoyed spectacular success in its return to theatres, remaining one of the biggest-grossing films in U.S. history. Yet experts say its impact may be less dramatic and more singular than first appears.

Part one of George Lucas' space trilogy hasn't done serious box-office damage to other movies or release plans, they say. And betting on other mothballed pictures to do as well in rerelease would be risky.

"There just aren't that many *Star Wars*," said Phil Barlow, distribution president for the Buena Vista unit of Walt Disney Inc., "which knows a thing or two about re-releasing movies."

When *Star Wars* returned Jan. 31, 20th Century Fox was cautiously optimistic. But it took just two weeks to rival *Gone With The Wind's* 1967 \$70 million re-issue

gross and hit a record total \$400 million.

"We're still numb," said Tom Sherak, chairman of 20th Century Fox domestic film group.

Fox was said to have hoped for \$100 million from the trilogy, including *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi* (March 7). Now, \$250 million is not a pipe dream, according to observers.

While it seems *Star Wars* is pushing other movies around like a bully with a Darth Vader complex, the result is more bruised egos than injured bottom lines.

Star Wars did cheat the \$115 million *Dante's Peak* out of the chance to debut at No. 1, but the volcano movie did manage to set a record February opening with \$18.1 million.

"If *Dante's* had opened in the \$7 million to \$10 million range, you would have said, wow, this isn't good. But the level it opened at was the level you would have expected," said Richard Fay, president of AMC Film Marketing.

Clint Eastwood saw his *Absolute Power* come in an also-ran to *Star Wars* last weekend, but the new movie took in an impressive \$16.8 million in its debut. That's on a par with other Eastwood openings: \$15.2 million for *In The Line Of*

Fire in 1993 and \$15 million for *Unforgiven* in 1992.

Damage may have been done to smaller films, said John Miller, general manager for Kerasotes Theatres in Illinois.

"I think some pictures got lost in the shuffle in the past couple of weeks," Miller said, suggesting the comedy *Fierce Creatures* probably fell off screens sooner than it might have.

One studio has blinked at the prospect of facing the space adventure and its sequels: Paramount Pictures' *The Saint*, starring Val Kilmer, will debut in the United States on April 4 instead of March 14.

"One has to react to the phenomenon of *Star Wars*," Wayne Lewellen, Paramount distribution president, told daily *Variety*.

The only studio publicly toying with the idea of changing its schedule was Fox itself. Its plan to release the trilogy in quick succession may mean the studio doesn't milk each film for all it's worth — a bigger window between *Empire* and *Jedi* was at least briefly scrutinised.

"They're stepping on themselves almost worse than anyone else," said Buena Vista's Barlow, "which has to make them actually quite happy."

However the *Star Wars*

bonanza ends up, it seems huge enough now to whet the industry's appetite for rereleases.

"I imagine there is a lot of reassessment going on," Barlow said. "I don't know if looking at things calmly it will cause a spate of these things."

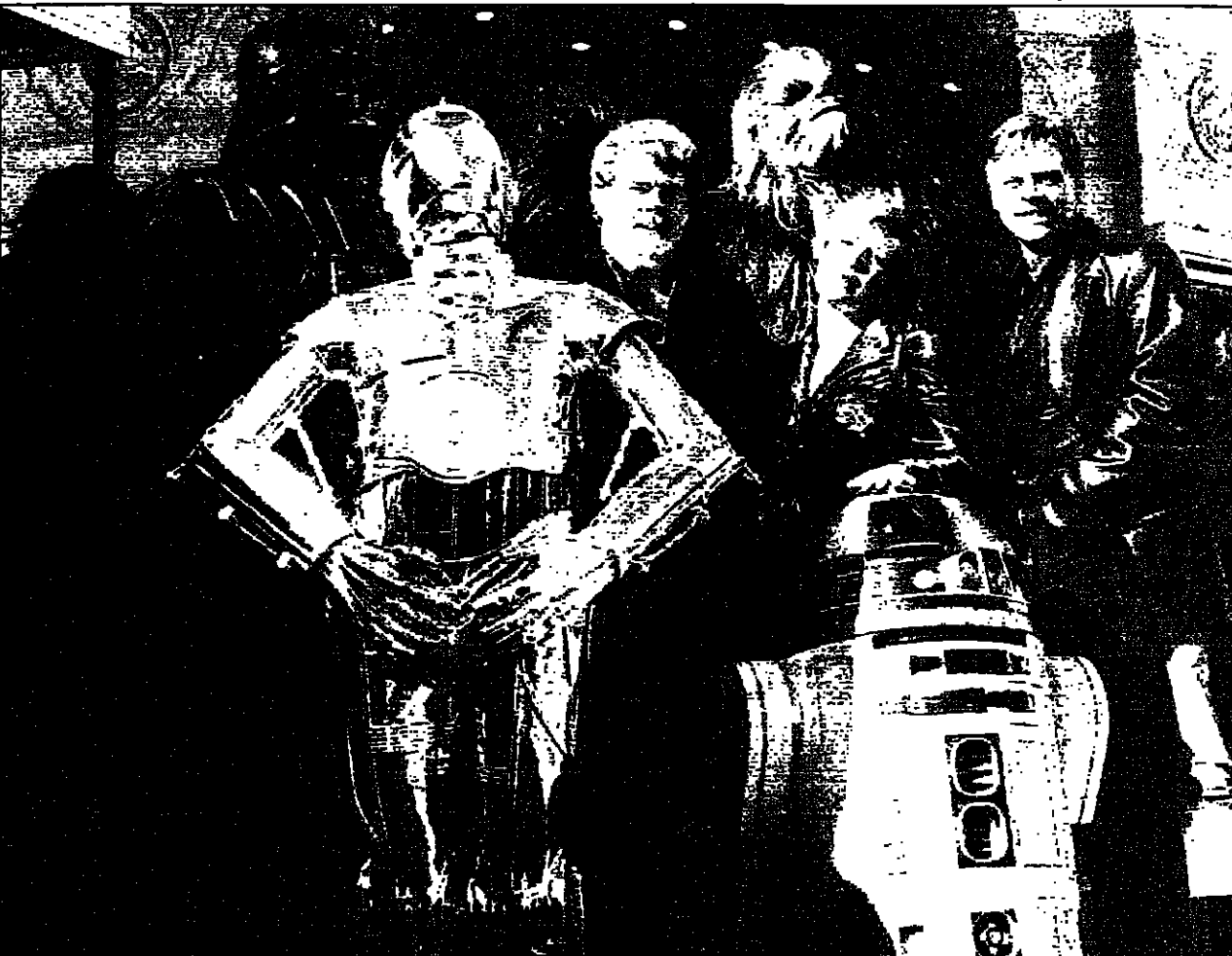
Some already were in the pipeline. Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* was long planned by Sony for a 20th anniversary rerelease this year (the date is as yet unannounced).

The studio, however, is considering marketing the film more aggressively post-*Star Wars*. Such an effort can be costly: Fox is spending \$15 million to support each part of the trilogy.

The 25th anniversary of *The Godfather* will be marked by Paramount with a limited 20-screen rerelease on March 21 using new prints made from the original negative. Paramount also reportedly is weighing rereleases of *Grease* and *Saturday Night Fever*.

A new version of *Das Boot*, with an hour of footage added by director Wolfgang Petersen to his World War II submarine drama, is planned by Sony's Columbia repertory.

But can other movies hope to match the heady success of *Star Wars*?



Director and writer of *Star Wars*, George Lucas (centre) poses with cast members Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill along with characters Darth Vader (left), '3CPO', 'R2D2' (short robot) and 'Chewbacca' (background) during the premiere of *Star Wars Special Edition* on Jan. 18 in Los Angeles. The film, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, regained the crown as the top-grossing film in North America when it became the first film to break the \$100 million box office barrier on Feb. 13 (Reuters photo)

"I'm not sure there are many pictures powerful enough to bring back after

15, 20 years," said Stephen Lightman, president of Memphis-based Malco

Theatres Inc. AMC's Fay agrees: "*Star Wars* was an experiment

that worked. I don't know about any others."

Mass mutilation of girls exposes official inaction

The circumcision of hundreds of girls in a displaced people's camp in Sierra Leone has sparked fresh demands for the practice to be banned. But the government, under pressure from lobbyists to preserve 'cultural heritage' and facing local council elections, continues to equivocate

By Rod Mac-Johnson

FREETOWN — The circumcision of 600 girls in a camp for displaced people has highlighted the Sierra Leone government's ambiguous attitude towards female genital mutilation.

Some of the girls suffered such severe injuries that the agency Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) says it had to intervene to save their lives.

"They were extremely lucky as many of them would have died if we had not stepped in," said Dr. Erica Smithson of the agency, which runs a clinic adjacent to the Grafton camp, 30 kilometres from Freetown. "Many of them were helpless when they were admitted to the intensive care ward."

The operations, involving the removal of the clitoris, were organised by a woman who went to the camp in

mid-January and told families there that the wife of the president, Patricia Kabbah, had given her "blessing" for the action and would provide gifts for the subsequent initiation ceremony, which is usually held two weeks after the operation.

Many parents sold items such as cooking utensils to raise money. They had to pay for the collection of firewood for the surgery. In addition, clothes, earrings, necklaces and food have to be provided as part of the tradition, and the operations cost \$30 each.

Neither the woman who visited the camp nor the first lady attended the event. Patricia Kabbah later issued a statement denying any knowledge of it or of offering money as an incentive for the operations to take place.

Most residents of the camp have been displaced from remote towns and vil-

lages in the East — where traditions such as female circumcision are deeply rooted — by the recently-ended civil war. They are poor, and dependent on handouts from organisations such as the United Nations World Food Programme and the Red Cross. "They can be easily fooled," says camp coordinator Prince Ngebuva. "A dollar can make them do things which they normally wouldn't do."

One of the girls, Salimatu Digba, said: "Our poverty was played on to get us to submit ourselves to having our clitorises cut."

An irate parent complained: "We've been duped and surrendered our daughters under a crooked arrangement. I don't have a cent to pay the Sowaya (circumcisers) who performed the operation."

The use of Kabbah's name was clearly a trick designed to con people into believing the event had official backing.

Nevertheless, the ruse played on past failures by politicians of all parties to condemn and outlaw female genital mutilation. Kabbah herself has said on several occasions that she is not prepared to disclose her views on the topic.

Dr. Ibrahim Turay, a political scientist at the University of Sierra Leone, blames

Painful tradition

Number of women who suffer genital mutilation

Nigeria	33m
Ethiopia	24m
Egypt	24m
Sudan	10m
Kenya	7m
Somalia	4.5m

- Mutilation is not required by any religion
- It is designed to preserve virginity, ensure marriageability and contain sexuality

Side-effects can include: • Death • Haemorrhage • Shock • Infection • Pelvic inflammation • Sterility • Cysts • Birth complications • Psychological, emotional and sexual problems • Abscesses



want others to go through the same ordeal now that they have the choice."

Groups opposing mutilation say that if the government is not prepared to impose a total ban, it should insist that the operation is carried out at registered centres, monitored by a special unit.

Supporters generally cite tradition as their justification. One of the girls involved in the Grafton incident, Salimatu Njai, said: "I am now fully liberated and civilised. I am not a full woman waiting for marriage."

History lecturer Mariatu Suma describes the practice as "a culture which prepares the young girl not only for womanhood but how to manage the home and run the family."

"What is being done now is that those against the practice are trying to demean female circumcision as a curse to humanity. We shall resist that."

Another history lecturer, Prince Cullen, points to a compromise route for future governments: "If the consensus is to abolish female circumcision, it should be done gradually from generation to generation, without any attempt to insult anybody or blackmail anybody — Gemini News."

inaction on politicians' fears of alienating a large section of voters.

If Medecins Sans Frontieres had not stepped in, he says, the Grafton incident

would have been the worst disaster of its kind in the country's history, with about 100 girls complaining of pains, fever, and heavy bleeding.

Social scientist Rhoda Fullah says young girls in displaced people's camps are now targets for Sowaya and others who promote the practice, and little is being

done to stop them.

"I still remember what I went through at the age of 10, resulting in my present plight — walking with a limp," she recalls. "I don't

Health screens may do more harm than good — experts

LONDON (R) — Screening for diseases such as prostate cancer or high blood cholesterol could cause more trouble than they are worth, two British experts have argued.

The benefits of early warning against fatal or debilitating illness should be balanced against the upset caused to patients being screened, Sarah Stewart-Brown and Andrew Farmer of Oxford University's Health Services Research Unit said.

"We must know the social and psychological costs of screening before deciding whether individual screening programmes should be provided," they wrote in a commentary in the British Medical Journal.

The benefits of some screening programmes — such as for cervical cancer in women — are unquestioned. But others are more controversial.

Last week Britain's National Health Service announced that screening men

for prostate cancer caused more problems than it prevented. They cited incontinence, impotence, postoperative deaths and psychological disturbance.

"People found in workplace screening programmes to be hypertensive (have high blood pressure) have increased sickness absence, increased anxiety, and reduced self-perceived health status, regardless of whether their hypertension warranted treatment,"

Brown and Farmer wrote. "Several studies on the effectiveness of cholesterol testing have shown a paradoxical effect: A reduction in deaths from heart disease but a small increase in total mortality."

Negative tests could give a false sense of invulnerability, they added. "For example, people who screen negative for cancer may feel safe continuing smoking, and those with low serum cholesterol eating their unhealthy diets."

Drink offers alcohol-free benefits of red wine

By Maggie Fox
Reuter

LONDON — Teetotallers take heart — now you, too, can share the benefits of a drop or two of wine. British researchers said.

Norman Williams and Alan Howard at Papworth Hospital near Cambridge in England say tests show an extract of the non-alcoholic, healthy components of red wine can lower blood fats — thus supposedly helping to prevent heart disease.

They plan to market their powder in a blackcurrant-flavoured drink and target it first at Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia, who do not drink alcohol for religious reasons.

Research has shown that alcohol — and some reports say red wine in particular — can help prevent heart dis-

ease. Long-term studies show light to moderate drinkers suffer less heart disease and live longer than non-drinkers or heavy drinkers.

Some researchers in particular think substances found in red wine, known as polyphenols, confer strong benefits in addition to alcohol.

But that is no good to people who cannot or do not wish to drink. So Dr. Williams' group extracted the polyphenols.

They had 20 healthy male volunteers drink red wine, white wine or the non-alcoholic drink every day for two weeks, and then measured their cholesterol levels.

Dr. Howard said blood tests showed that red wine and the extract both acted to stop oxidation, the same process as seen in rusting metal, which causes low-

density lipoproteins (LDL) to harden and clog arteries.

This process, known as atherosclerosis, is one of the most common hallmarks of heart disease. The researchers plan longer-term tests.

Dr. Howard said he thought both the alcohol and the polyphenols in red wine gave benefits.

"It does seem that alcohol in general prolongs life," he said. "The red wine effect is probably additional to that."

Dr. Howard said red-wine drinkers in the south of France had lower rates of heart disease than other people eating a high-fat diet, although other researchers say the Mediterranean diet overall, with large amounts of fruit and vegetables, is the likely cause.

He said plans were under way to set up a production

facility boiling down Cabernet Sauvignon wine in the south of France to market the drink, which has been named Nutrivine.

"We are going to launch it in Singapore at the end of March to see what people think about it," Dr. Howard said.

"They can't drink wine at all so that would be a good test."

Dr. Howard, who helped develop the hugely popular Cambridge Diet, added: "I think later on it would be introduced into the European countries, especially the Scandinavian countries like Norway because they can't drink at all and drive."

Dr. Howard hopes eventually to sell the drink in supermarkets. He and colleagues were presenting their findings recently at a conference in Cambridge.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

AT THE HAZARRE
By Frances Burton

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Palestinians keep open agenda for reconciliation talks in Nablus

RAMALLAH (Agencies) — All topics of dispute will be on the table when the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and opposition groups meet in reconciliation talks on Thursday, officials said.

"We chose not to set an agenda so that it couldn't be said that the authority wanted to stack things in its favour," Palestinian Communication Minister Imad Faluji, one of the meeting's organisers, said Wednesday.

Mr. Arafat will attend the "national dialogue" due to begin in the West Bank city of Nablus on Thursday, gathering the PNA, the largest opposition group Hamas, and seven other secular opposition factions.

The opposition groups will "put forward working papers and committees will be formed on each issue," Mr. Faluji told AFP.

Mr. Arafat called the meeting, the first to attract such wide participation, in a bid to end differences within Palestinian ranks before entering final-status negotiations with Israel, due to start in mid-March.

Abdul Rahim Mallouh, a member of the political office of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), said there were "no preconditions for

entering the talks.

"We want to discuss a number of issues such as the resistance against settlement, Jerusalem, the refugees, borders," he said. These are the issues to be determined in the final-status negotiations with Israel, which are due to be concluded by May 1999. The Palestinians hope to win an independent state from the talks.

"We also want to discuss the issues of political liberties and the political detainees in Palestinian prisons," Mr. Mallouh said. Hamas seeks to discuss "regulating the relations between police and the public and opening the way for all to participate in building Palestine," another political source said.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) has been the main victim of a crackdown by Palestinian police against militants following a series of suicide bombings in Israel last February and March.

Police arrested hundreds of militants from opposition groups and although most have since been released, tight control is kept on the groups' activities.

The DFLP and PFLP disclosed Tuesday that they have withdrawn from a Damascus-based Palestin-

ian opposition coalition.

Sources from the two groups said they had pulled out in protest at "the rejection by extremist members within the coalition" of a united Palestinian stand since right-wing leader Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in Israel.

The DFLP of Nayef Hawatmeh and George Habash's PFLP have boycotted meetings of the coalition since they pulled out in June, despite repeated efforts to seal a reconciliation, the sources told AFP. Eight other groups remain in the coalition.

The PFLP also stressed last week that a Palestinian dialogue was necessary ahead of talks with Israel scheduled to open in mid-March on the final status of the Palestinian territories. The call was condemned by other Damascus-based opposition groups.

Hamas, which staged a series of anti-Israeli suicide bombings a year ago, said in a statement that its attendance at the dialogue "does not represent a change in our attitude towards the Oslo" self-rule accords. Al Quds reported.

The smaller Islamic Jihad, which also joined the bombing spree last February and March which left 58 dead, has balked at joining the national dialogue.



His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday presents the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order to Yemeni Defence Minister Abdul Malek Siyyani (Petra photo)

King meets German officer and Yemeni defence chief

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday received at the Royal Court Germany's Assistant Chief-of-Staff for Training General Schwert and an accompanying delegation.

King Hussein discussed with the delegation bilateral ties and the means to promote them. The meeting was attended by Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai as well as German Ambassador to Jordan Peter Mende.

The King also received at the Royal Court, in the presence of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Yemeni Minister of Defence Abdul Malek Siyyani, who relayed to the King a message from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh on bilateral relations, particularly in defence matters and exchange of expertise.

Attending the meeting was Field Marshal Mirai and Yemeni Ambassador to Jordan Hassan Al Lawzi. King Hussein conferred upon Mr. Siyyani the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order.

East Jerusalem transformed by 30 years of Israeli building

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel's decision to authorise the building of a new Jewish suburb in East Jerusalem sets the seal on 30 years of creeping construction and crown Israeli domination of the Holy City's Arab sector.

Since occupying and "annexing" East Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has embarked on a frenzied campaign of building Jewish homes on confiscated land, pushing the Jewish population of the eastern sector up to 170,000.

The 10 Jewish suburbs, which mushroomed on the back of a systematic government policy of confiscating land, now completely surround the 155,000 Arab Palestinians of East Jerusalem.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected Wednesday to approve the building of the

11th Jewish suburb of East Jerusalem, despite Palestinian threats of a violent backlash if the project went ahead.

The "Har Homa" neighbourhood on the Jabal Abu Ghneim hill between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem is to provide 6,500 homes for an additional 25,000 Israelis.

The decision follows in the footsteps of previous governments, which since Israel's internationally-recognised decision to annex East Jerusalem and make it part of its "eternal capital" have pursued vigorous expansion plans.

A third of all Arab and communal land in the sector has been confiscated to make way for the 38,000 homes built so far exclusively for Jews. In addition, they have been subsidised with massive grants from the housing ministry.

In contrast, just 600 houses have been built under the same favourable conditions for Palestinians who represent 28 per cent of the total population of Jerusalem.

"Not only has the land been confiscated from the Palestinians, but the Israeli municipality has given out very sparingly private permits allowing construction on land which still belongs to them," said sociologist Meron Benvenisti.

The former deputy Israeli mayor of Jerusalem also dismissed the government's attempt to cushion the blow of the Har Homa decision by announcing the construction of 3,000 new Palestinian homes as a "huge bluff."

"Each time a construction project is launched, governments announce they will build for the Palestinians so as to appease the international community,"

he said. "But at the end of the day, nothing happens on the ground," he added.

Mr. Benvenisti pointed to the announcement several years ago, complete with media fanfare, of plans to build 7,500 houses for Palestinians in the Beit Hanina area in north Jerusalem. The houses are still on the drawing board.

Israel began its building programme in East Jerusalem as soon as it seized the sector in June 1967 by flushing out Palestinians living in the old city's Jewish quarter — abandoned by its Jewish residents in 1948.

The Israeli authorities then recognised the validity of title deeds of properties owned by Jews in East Jerusalem before the division of the city in 1948.

But at the same time they refused to recognise the

title deeds of properties belonging to Arabs in West Jerusalem, which has been under Israeli control from 1948.

In 1968, Israel's supreme court ruled that Israelis and Arabs in Jerusalem should live separately to cut down tension, but the decision has only been strictly implemented against Palestinians.

Ultra-nationalist Israeli settlers have been able to buy up property in the heart of the Muslim quarter of the Old City and in the Arab neighbourhood of Silwan, often using foreign companies as front organisations.

Part of the government's policy of rapid expansion has been to extend the official area of Jerusalem by 200 per cent through the absorption of Palestinian villages and parts of the West Bank.

Weizman 'not to press' Elizabeth to visit Israel

LONDON (AFP) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman, on the second day of a state visit here, said Wednesday he would not press Queen Elizabeth II to accept his invitation to visit Israel if she found it inconvenient.

Mr. Weizman, the first Israeli president to make a state visit to Britain, extended the invitation at a banquet at Buckingham Palace Tuesday night, but he spoke after the queen and she had no chance to formally respond.

"The queen will of course be advised by her ministers," said a palace spokesman, adding that she was "very grateful for the president's kind invitation."

"At some mutually convenient time in the future the queen looks forward to the opportunity of taking it up," he said, adding, the queen's programme was "extremely busy" for the next two years.

"If she has difficulty politically, I would not press the point," Mr. Weizman told the BBC Wednesday, the second day of his visit, but added, "I would like definitely to see her there."

The queen's husband, Prince Philip, and her eldest son and heir to the throne, Prince Charles, have both visited Israel in recent years, but the queen herself never has.

Mr. Weizman has close personal ties to Britain. His wife, Reuma, was born in London, and Mr.

Weizman was a Royal Air Force fighter pilot during World War II.

On Wednesday, Mr. Weizman and the queen were to unveil a statue memorial to Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Jews from the Holocaust.

Mr. Wallenberg served in Hungary during the World War II and is widely believed to have helped up to 70,000 Jews evade the Nazis' clutches.

Towards the end of the conflict he was captured by the Red Army and disappeared although there have since been unconfirmed sightings of the diplomat in Russia.

Mr. Weizman was visiting the Bank of England on Wednesday and meeting with Prime Minister John Major at 10 Downing Street.

He was also scheduled to meet with opposition leaders Tony Blair of the Labour Party and Paddy Ashdown of the Liberal Democrats.

Tuesday night's banquet was a feast of mutual accolades, with the queen lauding the "close and vital relationship" between Britain and Israel and "the great contribution which Jewish families have made to our national life since the days of the Norman kings."

She toasted Israel's first couple with the traditional "lechayim" — "to life."

Saudi crash victim families compensated

DUBAI (R) — Families of 132 victims in the world's deadliest mid-air collision over India in November have received \$2.74 million compensation, Saudi Arabian Airlines officials said on Wednesday.

A total of 349 people aboard the Saudi Jumbo jet and the Kazakh cargo plane died in the crash. The Saudi aircraft had 312 people on board, mostly Indian and Nepalese labourers travelling to the kingdom for work.

"A total settlement of \$2.74 million was spent on compensation for 132 Saudi airline passengers and their luggage," one official told Reuters by telephone from Saudi Arabia. "They included 130 Indians and two Pakistanis."

The sum, paid by the airline's international insurers, included \$20,000 in compensation per person as well as compensation for lost personal luggage and handbags.

"Applications for 60 others are being processed and we hope payment will start soon," added the official.

The international insurers will cover the passengers while Saudi Arabian Airlines and the Saudi government will pay compensation for the flight's crew and security personnel. A New Delhi high court judge probing the crash is yet to announce his findings.

Iranian diplomat slams Turkish army show of force against Islamists

ANKARA (AFP) — An Iranian diplomat in Turkey Wednesday lambasted a show of force by the Turkish military against pro-Islamic forces here, in a move like to strain the ties between the two countries.

"The move by the army tanks is the reflection of an understanding based on force," Iran's Consul General Said Zare in the eastern city of Erzurum told the UBA news agency in an interview.

"Are the tanks not an expression of violence? How can this be in compliance with the principles of a state of law?" Gen. Zare said. Tensions flared in Turkey between the Islamists and the influential military, the defenders of modern Turkey's secular principles, in early February in the wake of a controversial rally by Islamic fundamentalists in an Ankara suburb.

Those who addressed the rally in Sincan district, including Iran's ambassador in Ankara, Mohammad Bagheri, called for the adoption of Islamic law in Turkey, prompting an uproar by secular groups.

On Feb. 4, dozens of army tanks drove across the streets of Sincan in an apparent show of force against the Islamists, also raising concerns of a possible coup.

Ties between Turkey and Iran also deteriorated, with Mr. Bagheri silently returning to Tehran after a protest by the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

Gen. Zare also denounced remarks by a top Turkish general, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Cevik Bir who, according to Turkish press reports, accused Iran of helping terrorists at a public speech in the United States last week.

"General Bir's statement is very irresponsible and we don't allow any official to make such irresponsible remarks against us," Gen. Zare said.

Turkey's ambassador in Tehran, Osman Koruturk, was summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Monday and was presented a protest note regarding Gen. Bir's remarks.

Diplomatic sources said the Turkish foreign ministry would launch an investigation into Gen. Zare's remarks and might take an action against him.

King warns Netanyahu

(Continued from page 1)

and considers them as illegal and contravening international laws and endangering the peace process," he added.

King Hussein and the Crown Prince have repeatedly made it very clear to Israel that any move to change the demographic and geographic features of the occupied territories is unacceptable, whether in the political, legal or religious context.

China, Israel oppose religious extremism

BEIJING (AFP) — China and Israel stand together in their total opposition to radicalism that uses religion to promote extremism, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said Wednesday.

Mr. Levy was speaking just hours after a bomb attack in Urumqi, the capital of China's only Muslim-majority region, Xinjiang.

Asked whether the Chinese side had raised the issue of fundamentalism during his talks with senior Chinese leaders, Mr. Levy said: "Yes, absolutely."

"We share a similar view of this danger," said Mr. Levy, who arrived in China on Monday for a three-day visit.

As well as his counterpart Qian Qichen, Mr. Levy met with President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Vice Pre-

mier Li Lanqing. "When religion becomes a weapon and it is something that takes a life, it is extremely dangerous ... and threatens us with a return to the darkest ages of the past," Mr. Levy said.

"I'm pointing at those who in the name of Islam are developing a sort of poison and trying to threaten other people. This is not true Islam."

"People try to misuse to spread values totally opposed to the values of mutual respect between human beings," he said. China and Israel established diplomatic relations in early 1992.

Although Beijing has not hesitated to criticise Israel over its handling of relations with Palestinians or its Middle Eastern neighbours in the last year, the two sides enjoy friendly ties and growing bilateral trade.

Israel approves 'Har Homa' building

(Continued from page 1)

and a ploy rather than a real effort to deal with the desperate housing needs of the Palestinian population."

Successive Israeli governments have imposed restrictions on Arab building in East Jerusalem, with the aim of keeping the city's demographic balance at 72 per cent Jews and 28 per cent Arabs — the population breakdown right after the 1967 war. Arabs have a higher birth rate than Jews.

Israeli boosted the number of security forces in Jerusalem and the West Bank ahead of Wednesday's decision for fear of Palestinian protests. The Israeli army said armoured vehicles and sharpshooters had been deployed.

"We have taken the necessary measures, since the Palestinians have made it clear they do not accept that Jerusalem is Israel's capital," Interior Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said.

On Tuesday, several hundred Palestinians staged a protest march from Bethlehem to the site planned for the new Jewish settlement.

In New York, the Palestinian representative to the United Nations, Nasser Al-Kidwa, called for an emergency meeting of the Security Council "asking Israel to rescind its decision."

The top Palestinian representative in Jerusalem, Faisal Hussein, earlier called the Jabal Abu Ghneim a plan "a declaration of war" and warned it could spark a repeat of Israeli-Palestinian clashes last September.

He dismissed Mr. Netanyahu's promise to build Arab homes, saying: "We don't trust Netanyahu's promises."

Past Israeli governments have drawn up plans to build for Arabs in East Jerusalem, but they were never carried out.

Memories of Israeli blitz scar Lebanon's children

CANA, Lebanon (R) — As night falls over southern Lebanon, nine-year-old Bassima Bahja dreams once again that Israeli war-

planes are rocketing her home and her brother is lying in the rubble soaked in blood.

Bassima is one of many Lebanese children traumatised by a 17-day Israeli blitz in April 1996 that killed 200 people, mostly civilians, and forced some 400,000 refugees to flee their homes in South Lebanon under a torrent of bombs and shells.

"When night falls I remember everything. I see horrible dreams in which rockets hit our house. In one recent dream, a shell hit my brother and he was soaking in his blood," Bassima told Reuters in Jibsheet, one of the worst-hit

villages next to the South Lebanon zone Israel occupies.

Sample psychiatric surveys of some 500 southern children by the Lebanese Institute for Development Research and Applied Care (IDRAC) show that depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress were the main psychiatric disorders of Lebanese children who lived through the Israeli military operation.

Psychiatrists say the sample surveys, commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Lebanon's Education Ministry, show the effect of the blitz on some 45,000 children and adolescents in South Lebanon aged between seven and 18 years, including 2,500 considered to be the worst affected.

The psychiatrists say the children may never fully recover from the scars inflicted on their minds by the images of death and destruction they witnessed during 17 days of air raids and shelling of defenceless towns and villages.

Time alone does not necessarily heal trauma and the children must be helped to learn to confront their fears and bad memories — the first act on the road of recovery, psychiatrists say.

"From a purely statistical and scientific way of looking at things, the result of the surveys shows how deeply disturbing this experience was to the mental health of children living and suffering day after day the memory of this experience," IDRAC said in its report.

"After the aggression

39.8 per cent of the children and adolescents suffered from psychiatric disorders," it said.

Just over 30 per cent of the 2,500 children most exposed to the bombardments suffered from over-anxiety and 73.3 per cent had symptoms of over-anxiety.

Some 50 per cent experienced difficulty in sleeping and 13.8 per cent suffered from depression.

And 40.5 per cent of the children thought about death or committing suicide immediately after the blitz, the report said.

In Jibsheet, 12-year-old Hussein Tarhine told a Reuters reporter visiting his school of his fear of war and death.

"I would like to die a natural death. War death is ugly. You get hurt and dis-

figured before your heart stops beating," Hussein said when asked about his memories of the blitz.

A U.S.-brokered ceasefire understanding on April 26 ended the land, air and sea bombardment dubbed "operation Grapes of Wrath." Israel said its aim was to crush guerrillas fighting to oust its troops from South Lebanon and stop them lobbing Katyusha rockets into Israel. Militarily, it achieved neither objective.

Immediately after the blitz, IDRAC-trained teachers in several schools in South Lebanon in therapeutic methods to give psychological "first aid" to the worst-affected students.

The treatment tackled post-traumatic stress disorder by identifying the children's common fears after

their experiences, IDRAC said.

"After the blitz, students were unable to concentrate, they seemed to be lost. I wasn't harsh on them. After all, I went through the same horrible experience," Fatima Kamel Atiyah, a teacher in the village of Cana, said.

"I had to be understanding and flexible. Through the intervention method, I was helping them and helping myself too," she said.

Cana was the scene of the worst atrocity of the military attack when Israeli gunners poured nearly a score of shells into a U.N. military post where hundreds of refugees were sheltering, killing an estimated 102 men, women and children.

Seven-year-old Ali Burji, whose family lives in Cana,

witnessed the slaughter, including the deaths of his closest friends, Hadi and Aboudi.

"A Fijian soldier carried me and ran outside the shelter. He suddenly stopped and pointed at two bodies lying on the ground," Ali told Reuters. "They were Aboudi and Hadi, hit in the stomach, in the back, in the head and in the legs, a scene I will never forget."

Zeinab Nahhal, an eight-year-old girl in Jibsheet, still lives in fear of the Israelis.

"I fear Israelis the most. I fear they might take my younger sister," Zeinab told Reuters. "I never let go of her hand in the street. I like her the most in this world and will never let anyone get near her."

Steep drop in Iraqi transit cargo impairs Aqaba port for seventh straight year

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba had a seventh straight poor year in 1996, hit by a lack of Iraqi business while Baghdad awaited the U.N. "oil-for-food" accord, businessmen and shippers said Tuesday.

Jordan Shipping Agents Association (JSAA) figures show 1996 tonnage — including reexports to Iraq — rose two per cent to 12,008,829 tonnes from 11,755,860 tonnes in 1995.

"There is still a steep drop in Iraqi transit cargo from its pre-Gulf war peak and Iraqi exports via Aqaba port continue to be non-existent," Sufain Muhaisen, head of JSAA, told Reuters.

Iraq imported in 1996 via Aqaba 345,325 tonnes of sugar, rice and wheat, 50 per cent down from 685,065 tonnes in 1995.

Aqaba has suffered since the imposition of a U.N.

trade embargo on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in 1990. Iraqi-bound cargo was 6.1 million tonnes in 1989 along with over one million tonnes of Iraqi petrochemical exports via Aqaba.

Tonnage through Aqaba has shrunk from a peak of 20 million tonnes in 1988, when at least a third of cargo was for Baghdad.

Iraqi purchases of wheat fell 36 per cent to 155,270 tonnes from 246,020 tonnes in 1995, sugar imports to 129,185 tonnes from 296,445 tonnes and rice imports to 60,870 tonnes from 142,600 tonnes.

Shippers attribute the 1996 drop to Iraq waiting for the "oil-for-food" deal that lets Iraq sell \$2 billion worth of oil over six months to buy food and humanitarian supplies. It took effect in December.

Iraq also had substantial rice and sugar purchases from the Far East delivered to Um Qasr, its sole sea outlet, instead of Aqaba.

traders said.

Businessmen say a rise in Jordanian cargo was limited by an economic slowdown in 1996. Aqaba exports rose to 7.35 million tonnes from 6.63 million tonnes, of which six million tonnes was Jordan's main currency earners — phosphates and potash. Jordan-bound imports fell to 4.1 million tonnes from 4.4 million in 1995.

Jordanian businessmen hope for renewed activity once food shipments under the oil-for-food plan start unloading, possibly next month. Shippers said they expect 250,000 tonnes of French wheat bought by Iraq to discharge at Aqaba in March and April.

Shippers hope at least 20 per cent of Iraqi purchases will go via Aqaba. To boost Aqaba's competitiveness, Jordan will soon cut handling charges for Iraq-bound cargo that were already reduced 20 per cent last year, officials said.

Lebanese growth slows

BEIRUT (R) — Economic growth in Lebanon slowed in 1996 after three years of sustained expansion, the Bank of Lebanon said in its latest economic bulletin on Tuesday.

The central bank said its coincident indicator of economic activity stood at 168.3 at the end of December, just a fraction above its December 1995 level of 166.9 which was 17.1 per cent higher than its December 1994 level.

Lebanese officials have said that one cause for the slowing of economic growth in 1996 was a 17-day Israeli blitz in April that killed 200 people and caused extensive damage estimated at some \$500 million.

The bank said the economy

performed unevenly during 1996.

"Industry, trade, marine transport and construction sectors followed a downward trend while reconstruction work continued on the same pace and financial and tourism services marked sustained growth," it said.

The coincident indicator combines 12 economic series including imports, exports, electricity output and airport and port activity but the bank has not revealed the weighting of the different series and some economists question its value.

The central bank created the indicator in 1993 because of a lack of reliable data in Lebanon which prevents precise calculation of gross domestic product (GDP) and economic growth. The indicator stood at 100 in January 1993.

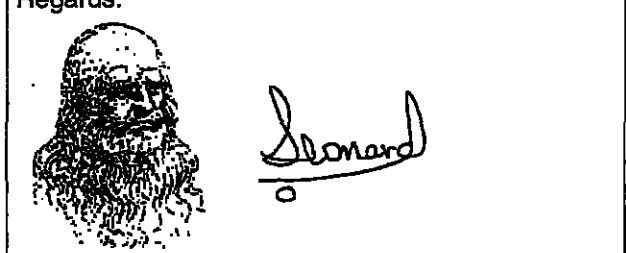
The bank said foreign debt rose \$464.3 million in 1996 to \$1,768.9 million at the end of December. Foreign debt stood at \$1,304.6 million in December 1995.

MEMO

To: Mona Lisa
From: Leonardo da Vinci
Subject: Your portrait
Date: February 26, 1503

In reply to your memo dated, sometime in the past, we appreciate your suggestion and will follow it with great pleasure.

Regards,



THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- spumante
- out (reprimand)
- Nasty kid
- Role
- Abhor
- Trademark
- Negligent one
- Woodworking machines
- Bakery come-on
- Nav. off.
- Harper Valley org.
- Genetic letters
- Auto
- River to the Bay of Biscay
- Ellipsoidal
- Ancient Greek walk
- Only
- Like bowling alleys
- Moderate
- Soap plant
- Excavation
- Muffins
- Studied again
- Mother-of-pearl
- NFL scores: abbr.
- Sibling
- RR stop: abbr.
- Paddle
- Clearance
- Juice fruit
- Assortment of sorts
- Jim Davis cartoon character
- Snow field
- Wrongful act
- Wagers
- Sow
- Literary collections

DOWN

- Tell's target
- Kind of packaging
- Gaits
- Yen
- Punish
- Owns
- Musical James
- Strange
- Culpable
- Ecclesiastical court
- In the past
- Rocky crag
- "Man" (1984 film)
- Tabu
- "With a View"
- Boat for the brave
- The — (TV show)
- Salmon spawning areas
- Soup spoon
- Impish
- Vast
- String
- Used a stopwatch
- Smells
- Lab burners
- Escaping liquids
- Intimidated
- Aromatic herb
- avis
- Broadway lights
- Edible bulb
- Plato's marketplace
- Lets
- Brief bad mood
- Hook's cohort
- boy!
- Male swan
- Poem
- First lady

by Philip J. Anderson

ACROSS

1 SCAP 2 CLAM 3 DATA 4 RHODE 5 AERO 6 ETON 7 TORAN 8 LANA 9 ARNE 10 EDDY 11 NELSON 12 NEIN 13 SARAH 14 EJECT 15 AIM 16 MAS 17 ELLA 18 DRAKE 19 STAMMERS 20 AMIE 21 ELTON 22 ELEA 23 MANNERED 24 TASSEL 25 TEST 26 PHEN 27 ADE 28 SPACE 29 PORCH 30 TELL 31 AARON 32 HENRY 33 ALIA 34 LOOT 35 OLEOS 36 NEAR 37 ANNE 38 REVUE 39 DESK 40 SEED 41 SNEER

DOWN

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61

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Expert:
Syria needs \$60 billion to boost employment

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria needs \$60 billion to create new jobs for three million people who will join the work-age population between now and 2011, according to an economic study published Wednesday.

There were 4.225 billion Syrians of working age in 1994, but that figure is expected to rise to 7.290 billion in 2011, study by Damascus University Economics Professor Saad Nabulsi showed.

According to the International Labour Organisation, the creation of one job in developing countries costs \$20,000. Dr. Nabulsi said.

He also forecast an increase in working women from 16 per cent of the workforce in 1994 to 25 per cent in 2011.

He said that the Syrian population is expected to rise to 21 million in 2011 from 15 million in 1995, according to recent official statistics.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 26/02/97 19:30

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6877	0.6120	1.4765	121.33	1.3655	1678.70	1.8989	5.6947
DEM	0.5925	1.0000	0.3624	0.8743	72.18	0.3085	993.57	1.1238	3.3718
GB Sterling	1.6339	2.7680	1.0000	2.4118	199.29	2.2311	2742.88	3.1010	9.3040
CHF	0.6773	1.1225	0.4140	1.0000	84.25	0.8245	1139.35	1.2930	3.5543
JP Yen	0.0082	1.3855	0.5023	1.2112	1.0000	1.1208	13.78	155.80	4.8735
CA Dollar	0.7322	1.2385	0.4551	1.0795	0.8725	1.0000	122.57	1.3893	4.1855
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0063	0.3643	0.8879	1380.48	0.8133	1.0000	11.30	3.3905
NL Guilder	0.0024	1.0000	0.3624	0.8743	1380.48	0.8133	1.0000	11.30	3.3905
FR Franc	0.1785	0.2965	0.1075	0.25354	21.37	0.2399	33.33	33.3300	1.0000

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	20.45	20.35
WTI	20.15	20.05
Bony	20.45	20.35
Pulaski	20.45	20.35
UL Gas	194.00	195.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4502	0.16331	0.39398	32.495
AE Dirham	0.3723	0.6254	0.22574	0.54226	45.1807
KW Dinar	3.3003	5.57103	2.02102	4.87567	402.091
OM Rial	0.3776	0.6254	0.22574	0.54226	45.1807
CY Pound	1.9735	3.3322	1.2063	2.9141	240.592

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	353.5	354
Silver (oz's)	5.18	5.21
Platinum (oz's)	353	354
CU (3 Months)	N/A	N/A
CU (6 Months)	N/A	N/A
CU (9 Months)	N/A	N/A
Lead (3 Months)	N/A	N/A
Lead (6 Months)	N/A	N/A
Lead (9 Months)	N/A	N/A

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	-9-	-1-
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.25	5.37	5.50	5.43	5.75
DEM	5.37	5.49	5.61	5.54	5.75
GBP	0.35	0.35	0.36	0.37	0.37
CHF	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15
JPY	3.20	3.24	3.27	3.27	3.34
FRF	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
ITL	7.28	7.17	7.00	6.78	6.70

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lb)	172.08	Spot
Sugar (c/lb)	308.2	Spot
Wheat (c/lb)	133	Spot
Soya (c/lb)	22.53	Spot
Barley (c/lb)	17	Spot
Barley (c/lb)	2.36	Spot
Barley (c/lb)	2.36	Spot

JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.372	1.374
DE Mark	0.4239	0.426
CH Franc	0.4952	0.4977
FR Franc	0.1255	0.1261
JP Yen	0.0049	0.0050
NL Guilder	0.377	0.378
IT Lira	0.4246	0.4267

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get out to parties, or just go visiting with your loved ones today, and see as many old friends as possible. Bring along some small meaningful gifts which will be appreciated by the recipient and show him or her of your kindness.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Take some time today to do something of a community-oriented nature which will benefit others, and also make you feel good about yourself. Later this evening will be good to go out with your mate to a romantic spot.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be sure you don't neglect contacting loved ones and close friends today who are at a distance from you. Visit those later this evening who are lonely, and bring a present which will be very much appreciated.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Give much thought and time to

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1997

the one you love today, and don't be afraid to speak your feelings openly to this person. Later this evening will be good for you to seek out fellow associates and get their support on a project.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) An invitation may be extended to you today for some special function which you should accept, so as not to offend the sender. You should try to patch things up with someone you have recently had a disagreement.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Make this today for genuine and pure happiness and show goodwill towards everyone you meet, especially those who seem sad. Tonight will be good for you to stay home with loved ones and relax for the days ahead.

LIBRA: (September 23 to

towards those who you feel are in a difficult mood.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Although this is a day today to have a wonderful time, don't neglect to consider events in the days ahead. The world is your oyster later this evening and it should be enjoyed by those who are important in your life.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is a fine day today to be gregarious and to see as many friends and loved ones as you can. Group activities will be fun, especially if they are spent with close friends who don't have anyone they can count on.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be with the one you love today and get into the spirit of relaxing for the days ahead. Entertain some fascinating friends and favourite loved ones whom you wish to see at recreational activities which will be fun.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Visit as many friends as you can today, since each one will add to your contentment. If you buy a loved one a present, make it unique, so that he or she will be completely surprised and delighted by your efforts.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Even if bustling crowds usually make you a bit uncomfortable, today you'll enjoy the feeling of camaraderie which will be present. Later this evening will be a good time to meet with good friends for some fun.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Many new conditions and ideas will develop today, so make use of them and make your daily life more inspiring. Get plenty of rest this evening, for the next few days and the coming week will be stressful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If any unusual circumstances arise today, handle them wisely and with good humour. Don't risk your reputation on any unproven business venture which could make others doubt your abilities to handle career activities.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can find some great success today if you involve yourself in some public function. Be sure you wear your finest clothes, so you will radiate the appearance of someone who is prosperous and is respected.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Present your fellow associates with some thoughtful, but inexpensive, gifts today, and they will look at you in a new light. Remain cheerful later this evening and thereby you can have a pleasant attitude for the days ahead.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If you are invited to several parties tonight, try to attend as many as possible without tiring yourself out. Be thoughtful to your loved ones today and they will respond in a thoughtful and pleasant manner.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get your home in perfect order today, then have as many guests in as you can fit. Be a charming host or hostess to those who are in your home and thereby you can make a good impression upon them as a friendly individual.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your communication skills are especially sharp today, so make any calls, which will benefit you. Be very careful while driving on the highway this evening, so that you don't get into any difficulties.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Study your financial situation carefully today, and you can reap fine rewards in the days ahead. Listen carefully to any advice you receive from knowledgeable people and act upon this information with enthusiasm.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Show those in positions of power that you are ambitious today, and you'll get fine results. Get into the spirit later this evening of being with close friends and you will enjoy being in their company for fun activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Doing something unusual today for your mate can bring you both much happiness. Be sure that your plans for this evening include close friends and loved ones, who will be pleased to enjoy your company.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

Peanuts

YES MA'AM, I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D MIND IF I BROUGHT HIM TO SCHOOL TODAY..

YES MA'AM, HE'S A VERY SMART DOG. THANK YOU FOR SAYING SO..

"FINE WORDS BUTTER NO PARSNIPS"

NO MA'AM, I NEVER KNOW WHAT HE'S THINKING..

Andy Capp

SOME BLOKES SURE HAVE A WAY WITH WOMEN, EH, ANDY?

OH, I DUNNO, IT'S COST HIM SIX GINS TO GET HER LIKE THAT.

IT ONLY TAKES ONE TO AROUSE MY MISSES.

THE ONE HE BUYS HIS GIRL-FRIEND.

WATCH YOUR MOUTH, JACK.

Mutt'n'Jeff

HOW'S THE FISHING TODAY, JEFF?

SHHH! WE'RE ON ONE NOW!

HOW IN THE WORLD DO YOU TEND THE FISH TO THE TOP SO YOU CAN STUN THEM WITH A BAIL BAIT?

SASH! I USE CHEWING TOBACCO FOR MY BAIT!

THE FISH TAKE A BITE AND WHEN THEY COME UP TO ER, CLEAR THEIR THROATS, I HIT EM WITH THE BAIT!

Strong yen depresses Japanese car sales in Arab Gulf states

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A surge in the yen against the dollar since 1991 has sharply depressed Japan's car exports to the region but the Asian industrial giant remains the dominant supplier, import figures have showed.

Japan controlled nearly 63 per cent of the lucrative car market in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 1991 but the share

plummeted to around 51 per cent in 1995, the state-run Emirates Industrial Bank (EIB) said.

The decline was coupled with an increase in the sales of the United States, Germany and South Korea, while France, Britain, Sweden, Italy and other automakers almost maintained their share.

"The prices of Japanese cars increased by nearly 20 per cent and this has adversely affected their share in the GCC market," EIB said in a study.

Its figures showed Japan's car exports plunged to 62,000 units in 1995 from 113,000 in 1991, while the total vehicle sales to the region also declined to around 120,000 from 178,000 over the same period.

In contrast, U.S. car exports surged to 45,000 from 31,000, boosting the country's market share to 26 per cent from 25 per cent.

South Korea's share near-

ly doubled to nine per cent as it pressed ahead with an export blitz aimed at strengthening its share of the competitive market, which has long been dominated by Japan, the United States and Germany.

South Korea is banking on the competitive price of its cars and its continuous improvements to meet driving and climatic conditions.

"This is a very important factor. South Korea is continuously working on improving the standards of its cars to cope with the driving and natural conditions in this region," said a South Korean car dealer in Abu Dhabi.

"The price of its cars is also more than 15 per cent lower than the prices of Japanese and American cars. Such factors, coupled with the good quality of its cars, have helped South Korea push quickly into the market."

But agents of Japanese cars in the United Arab Emi-

rates (UAE) are not worried about their eroding share, saying it is set to recover. They cited the recent decline in the Japanese yen against the dollar.

The dealers said the market share of the Japanese cars had sharply fluctuated over the past decade but added it remained the biggest.

"Despite the recent decline, Japan still controls the GCC car market. This is because of the strong reputation of Japanese cars here," one car dealer said.

"Another key factor is that Japanese car makers provide comprehensive support services for the customers after the purchase," he added.

The dealers said they expected sales of Japanese cars to increase in 1997 following the decline in the yen against the dollar.

Japan has remained the top commercial partner of GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Their two-way trade stood at around \$33 billion in 1995, lower than the \$36 billion exchange in 1994, when the yen was weak against the dollar.

Saudi Arabia is the top Gulf car market for Japan, Germany and the United States, followed by the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar.

Demand for cars in those four Gulf countries is among the strongest in the world given their high per capita income and economic growth, according to car dealers.

A breakdown by EIB showed Toyota of Japan remained the top seller in the GCC, with exports of 36,000 cars in 1995.

The U.S. General Motors sold 16,500 vehicles while around 10,000 cars were exported by the Japanese Nissan, 8,000 by Ford of the United States, and 7,000 by Japan's Honda.

Murad calls for joint projects between Jordan and India

AMMAN (Petra) — Amman Chamber of Commerce President Haidar Murad Wednesday said that Jordan and India could cooperate in launching joint projects in the field of clothes and textile industry noting that both countries have made concrete progress in this regard.

In a meeting with an Indian delegation grouping merchants and industrialists who are currently in Amman for talks on bilateral cooperation in economic fields, Mr. Murad told the visiting delegation that Jordan has created a good climate for foreign investment and pointed out that the government has issued an investment promotion law for this purpose. He added that the law equalises between local and foreign investors.

Mr. Murad urged the delegation to market Jordanian goods in India and to enhance cooperation with Jordanian companies.

He also lauded the Indian know-how which Jordan can make use of in convertible, food and industrial fields.

Indian ambassador to Jordan, Gajanan Wakarkar, talked about the investment climate in his country and highlighted the positive development which India has witnessed in the last two years and which encourages investments.

Head of the delegation told Mr. Murad that the visit aimed at further boosting trade ties between the two countries.

He said that India is a major importer of Jordanian phosphates and other Jordanian products and seeks to increase trade volume with the Kingdom.

Trade volume between the two countries amounted to \$228 million in 1995 compared to \$166 million for the last eleven months last year.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Study shows AFM brokers charging very low commission

A COMPARATIVE study that covered 17 emerging markets in the world shows that commission charged by brokers at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) is one of the lowest as 13 markets charge commissions higher than Jordan's stock market. According to the study, only four markets charge either equal or less commissions than the AFM.

Brokers at the stock exchange charge 0.65 per cent for the ordinary transaction. The percentage is reduced to 0.5 per cent if the transaction exceeds JD 20,000. The AFM charges 20 per cent of the brokers' commissions in accordance with article 73 of the AFM bylaws.

Following are the commissions charged in the 18 emerging markets: Jordan (0.5 per cent - 0.65 per cent); Mexico (1.0 per cent - 1.7 per cent); Kuala Lumpur (0.3 per cent); Muscat (0.5 per cent - 0.75 per cent); Philippines (1.5 per cent); Portugal (0.5 per cent - one per cent); Singapore (one per cent or less); Vienna (1.25 per cent); Brazil (0.5 per cent - one per cent); Taiwan (1.4 per cent or less); Helsinki (one per cent); Athens (0.5 per cent - one per cent); Kenya (1.15 per cent or less); Korea (0.4 per cent or less); South Africa (1.2 per cent or less); Sweden (0.3 per cent - 0.65 per cent); Thailand (0.5 per cent) and Tunisia (0.1 per cent - 0.5 per cent). (Jordan Times).

Jordan imports from U.S. rise

ACCORDING to a U.S. Embassy official, the United States exports to Jordan amounted to about \$323 million last year compared to \$309 million in 1995. Quoting statistics from the U.S. Commerce Department, he said that Jordan exports to the U.S. amounted to \$24.5 million in 1996, down from \$28.7 million worth of products exported in 1995.

Jordan's main imports from the U.S. were cars, wheat, equipment and machinery, medical equipment and medicines, cooking oil, clothes, tobacco, chemical products, furniture, aluminium, sugar and paper among a wide variety of goods.

Meanwhile, the commercial services section at the U.S. embassy will organise a computer exhibition from March 12-14/1997 at the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel. The Fifth American Products Exhibition will be held in June.

Shair meets chief of Egypt's Capital Market Commission

Wahib Shair, Director General of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) Tuesday met Abdul Hameed Ibrahim, the Chairman of Capital Market Commission in Egypt. Mr. Ibrahim, who is currently on a short visit to Jordan, discussed with Mr. Shair ways and means of enhancing cooperation between the two countries especially in fields related to the capital market and stock exchanges. The discussion took place within the framework of a policy aiming at strengthening the ties and establishing mutual coordination among Arab stock markets and improving investment climate within the Arab World.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKHSANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 26/02/1997											
LAST 12 MONTHS HIGH		COMPANY'S NAME		P / E	DIV. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
266.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	14.5	1.32	5	100	26460	263.00	265.00	2.20	+
2.100	1.900	JOR. PETROL. RES.	1.2	0.00	26	13090	26355	2.04	2.00	0.34	-
3.650	2.900	BANK OF JORDAN	11.6	0.00	1	50	161	3.20	3.21	0.01	+
7.200	1.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.4	5.87	1	150	356	2.38	2.37	0.01	-
4.250	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.6	2.94	2	533	2503	4.75	4.72	0.03	-
1.090	0.850	JOR. GULF BANK	5.1	8.14	66	82600	70539	0.85	0.86	0.01	+
4.180	3.480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.9	0.00	5	550	2161	3.91	3.93	0.02	+
3.800	3.000	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	17.7	0.00	4	442	1446	3.35	3.28	0.07	-
1.440	1.000	PHILADEL. DEV. BK.	9	0.00	4	650	783	1.20	1.21	0.01	+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 200.85	ICRG: +0.36			114	98165	130762			
2.830	1.830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.5	10.26	3	500	975	1.97	1.95	0.02	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 120.22	ICRG: -0.10			3	500	975			
1.830	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.5	7.23	4	900	1498	1.66	1.66	0.00	-
1.580	1.080	KHAY. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	24	15700	19488	1.24	1.24	0.00	-
1.080	0.820	KHAY. REAL ESTATE	21.5	3.84	3	850	820	0.96	0.97	0.01	+
0.970	0.580	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	30.8	0.00	1	1000	600	0.61	0.60	0.01	-
2.200	1.450	KHAY. EAST HOTELS	62.0	0.00	1	5100	7444	1.46	1.44	0.02	-
1.220	0.940	KHAY. EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	7100	7454	1.08	1.05	0.03	-
2.230	1.690	UNIFIED CO.	9.0	5.82	7	2750	5198	1.90	1.89	0.01	-
1.200	0.780	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	1	250	195	0.78	0.78	0.00	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 109.30	ICRG: -0.06			46	33650	42596			
3.730	3.080	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	15.8	2.88	12	1862	6442	3.47	3.47	0.00	-
10.400	8.120	JOR. PETROL. RES.	10.3	7.88	11	2096	21274	10.15	10.15	0.00	-
1.590	1.150	MOOGS INDUSTRIES	60.8	0.00	1	300	411	1.38	1.37	0.01	-
3.520	1.650	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	35.9	0.00	1	1150	3071	2.67	2.67	0.00	-
4.450	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	21.0	5.22	8	1900	1217	0.83	0.82	0.01	-
2.400	1.050	JORDAN DAIRY	13.5	6.82	1	850	1870	2.20	2.20	0.00	-
2.310	1.870	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	8.9	7.50	1	250	400	1.60	1.60	0.00	-
3.310	2.500	GENERAL ALKING	6.4	12.00	1	100	250	2.50	2.50	0.00	-
2.010	1.340	RAFA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	5	1150	1485	1.34	1.30	0.04	-
6.950	4.250	DAR ALDINA DV. INV.	13.4	4.08	1	500	2450	4.98	4.90	0.08	-
5.800	3.130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	8.6	8.62	1	450	1569	3.50	3.48	0.02	-
960	450	LIVERPOOL & POULTRY	9	0.00	30	22900	1511	1.60	1.59	0.01	-
1.600	1.180	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	1	250	283	1.18	1.13	0.05	-
1.020	0.540	NATIONAL IND.	9.6	9.23	3	1100	715	0.65	0.65	0.00	-
0.300	0.540	INTERMED. PETROL. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	300	304	1.71	1.71	0.00	-
1.170	0.670	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	1	250	183	0.75	0.73	0.02	-
1.670	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	29.0	0.00	17	7150	10952	1.53	1.55	0.02	+
2.910	1.440	UNIV. MOON INDUS.	5.2	11.56	12	10450	18037	1.73	1.73	0.00	-
1.320	1.140	IND. INS. ASSOCIATES	17.2	0.00	16	8450	7474	1.72	1.71	0.01	-
1.270	0.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	25.0	0.00	13	20150	18938	0.92	0.92	0.00	-
2.450	1.750	EL. & WAT. READY WEAR	9	0.00	1	150	279	1.87	1.86	0.01	-
1.470	0.930	UNION CH. & VEG.	24.9	0.00	13	24550	24584	1.00	1.02	0.02	+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 118.34	ICRG: -0.06			152	103308	141321			
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 156.82	ICRG: +0.17			315	235623	315654			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 26/02/1997											
0.700	0.440	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	18.9	0.00	2	1000	465	0.48	0.47	0.01	-
0.790	0.500	JOR. TRADE PAC.	13.9	0.00	13	13500	7020	0.53	0.52	0.01	-
0.850	0.700	UNION INV. SOI	67.9	0.00	9	15200	3047	0.73	0.71	0.02	-
0.910	0.370	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	5	10600	4875	0.46	0.46	0.00	-
0.950	0.850	AL-DAMLIAT 751	14.7	0.00	4	886	395	0.66	0.65	0.01	-
0.640	0.320	JOR. INDUS. MACHS-VEHCO	9	0.00	15	21500	4515	0.22	0.21	0.01	-
0.750	0.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	9	3400	2074	0.52	0.51	0.01	-
1.690	1.300	KHAY. CHLORINE	9	0.00	7	2300	3220	1.41	1.40	0.01	-
0.690	0.450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	9	9800	4606	0.48	0.47	0.01	-
0.820	0.520	KHAY. TEXTILE	11	0.00	12	5800	3085	0.58	0.53	0.05	-
0.880	0.400	KHAY. MULL. ENG. NAMCO	9	0.00	4	703	330	0.49	0.47	0.02	-
0.990	0.720	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	3	2000	1480	0.74	0.74	0.00	-
0.700	0.430	ARAB ELCTRIC INDUS.	9	0.00	2	300	306	0.51	0.51	0.00	-
0.620	0.350	MIDWEST PHARM. 751	9	0.00	1	300	111	0.63	0.62	0.01	-
1.330	1.020	UNION TOBACCO 751	9	0.00	2	800	616	1.02	1.02	0.00	-
0.730	0.390	IND. ENG.	27.1	0.00	2	3000	1320	0.45	0.44	0.01	-
0.820	0.590	KHAY. POLYMER	9	0.00	2	800	370	0.78	0.74	0.04	-
0.950	0.530	KHAY. EAST COMPLEX	7.9	0.00	11	23250	16883	0.67	0.67	0.00	-
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 110	ICRG: +0.17			110	117139	54678			

Volume stays low in second Palestinian bourse session

OCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — The embryonic Palestinian stock market ended its second week of trading in the West Bank city of Nablus on Tuesday but said no data would be released until volume picked up in the bourse, now only open one day a week.

"We will not be publishing daily market data during the introductory phase because volume is extremely limited. Demand and supply don't exist, so for the first few weeks market data for turnover would be misleading," said Safwan Al Bataineh, general manager of the Palestinian Securities Exchange.

He said 23 companies were listed on the bourse launched last week and another 20 were in the process of joining.

"At this preliminary period there isn't heavy trading, but what was surprising to some was that most of the orders were buy orders," he told Reuters.

"This means that people have confidence in the companies and in the stock market," said Jaries Qassab, general manager of the United Securities Company, one of four brokerage firms based in Ramallah and Nablus registered to do business at the exchange.

"I believe we have made a good start just one week after the exchange opened. This is a build-up area for bringing accounts and increasing the trading volume," Mr. Qassab said.

told Reuters. Omar Mahmoud, head trader for the Target Securities, said overall there was slight increase in the prices of around 1,000 shares in this week's transactions.

Trading is being conducted in the dinar or the dollar, depending on which currency the company was capitalised.

Mr. Bataineh said that during the introductory phase expected to last several weeks, the exchange would hold one weekly trading session. Regular trading, with several sessions per week, would begin as trading volume builds up.

Brokers opened more than 200 accounts for Palestinian investors from across the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the market was launched, Mr. Bataineh said.

Brokerage firms said investors from Jordan and Israel had begun making inquiries about investing through the \$2 million electronic bourse.

The market was set up to help attract long-term investment from expatriate Palestinians, foreign capital and provide an alternative to common forms of investments such as bank deposits and real estate.

"But all the orders we have are from Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and

Courier named to U.S. Davis Cup team for quarter-finals

NEWPORT BEACH, California, (R) — Former World Number One Jim Courier will play for the United States in the Davis Cup tennis quarter-finals against the Netherlands in April. U.S. Davis Cup captain Tom Gullikson announced Tuesday.

Gullikson did not name the rest of the four-man squad for the April 4-6 tie because of uncertainty over injuries to some of his potential recruits and an apparent reluctance to participate by other top American players.

"Courier's performance in our opening-round win in Brazil was fantastic. I haven't seen him that focused since he was number one in the world," Gullikson said from the Palisades Tennis Club in Newport Beach, site of the quarter-final.

"I am ecstatic to have him on the team," added Gullikson of the 18th-ranked Courier.

"As far as the remainder of the team, I'll have to wait and see who is avail-

able and healthy."

Numerous reports have suggested that the top two Americans — World Number One Pete Sampras and third-ranked Michael Chang — were not interested in playing Davis Cup in the early rounds.

Unfortunately for Gullikson, injuries have cut into his deep reserve of American talent.

Davis Cup stalwart Todd Martin is unavailable to play the Dutch team after undergoing arthroscopic surgery Tuesday on his right elbow.

Andre Agassi has been struggling with an ankle injury, while Malivai Washington, always available for Davis Cup when called upon, is nursing a knee injury he suffered during a singles win in the first-round against Brazil and re-aggravated last week in Memphis.

A United States Tennis Association spokesman said the entire team was expected to be named Tuesday but the injury situation had left Gullikson



Jim Courier

contemplating his options. According to ITF regulations, Gullikson must

name the rest of his team no later than 10 days prior to the tie.

Relaxed Bulls repeating record run

WASHINGTON, (AFP) — Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls are on pace to match their incredible 72-win season of a year ago, even without the same burning desire to silence critics they felt before.

Jordan set aside a difficult return from an 18-month retirement by dominating the National Basketball Association last season, leading all scorers in sparking the Bulls to their fourth title in six years.

"The team is more relaxed about it this year," Jordan said.

"It's not quite the same pressure. Last year I had to push myself. I had something to prove. It's a different motivation this time."

Last season the Bulls had to regain the lofty status they once had. This year they are playing to keep it.

"I don't think we felt invincible last year," Jordan said. "We felt we had to go out and prove ourselves. Now we just have to go with the same routine every day. The challenges are going to

get tougher."

Even so, Jordan refuses to call the winningest collection of players over two NBA seasons the best club of all time, citing Larry Bird's Boston Celtics and Magic Johnson's Los Angeles Lakers of the 1980s plus the Bulls' lineup he led to titles in 1991, 1992 and 1993.

"I think (we) would have to be one of the best teams. I am reluctant to say the best team ever," Jordan said. "Those '91, '92, '93 teams were great. And those Magic and Bird teams — look at all the great players they had. It would be a close race."

But the current Bulls make a strong case.

Two months before the NBA playoffs open, the Bulls are an NBA-best 49-6. They are an NBA-best 25-1 at home, having won 19 in a row there. They have won 15 of their past 16 games overall, including seven in a row.

"We feel like we are going along, doing things like we

have to even though games are getting tougher," Chicago coach Phil Jackson said.

"We know we will have to step it up down the stretch. Games are getting a bit tighter. Teams in the conference are playing us for the second and third times. We know it's going to step up competitively."

Jordan leads the NBA with 30.6 points a game and also contributes 5.7 rebounds, 4.2 assists and 1.8 steals a game — numbers befitting his 30 million-dollar salary and status as the league's Most Valuable Player.

But Chicago's unsung hero is Scottie Pippen, who adds 19.6 points, 6.6 rebounds and 5.8 assists every night. He struck for a season-high 47 points last week against Denver.

"When you look at what he has done this season, he is consistently all-star caliber," Jordan said. "He can get overlooked because of my play. But I couldn't do what I do without him. He is

my MVP."

And then there is Dennis Rodman, the flamboyant forward who makes \$9 million this season but missed 11 games while suspended for kicking a photographer. He leads the league with 16 rebounds a game.

"We never panic or crack under pressure," Rodman said. "We do our jobs. That's why we win."

Center Luc Longley from Australia missed 18 games with a separated left shoulder but has contributed 7.9 points and 5.2 rebounds a game.

Longley's work underneath helps Rodman shine, especially in a league filled with such gargantuan European centers as Romanian Gheorghe Muresan, Dutchman Rik Smits and Lithuania's Arvydas Sabonis.

"These Europeans out there, they play like they don't do anything wrong," Rodman said. "I know what they do and I don't care how big they are. I am coming at them."

Vicenza make history

BOLOGNA, Italy, (AFP) — Vicenza coach Francesco Guidolin was thanking his lucky stars on Wednesday, after nearly substituting the man who booked the club's place in their first ever Italian Cup final.

"Vicenza, who won the home leg of their semi-final against Bologna 1-0, snatched a late 1-1 draw here on Tuesday night when Giovanni Cornacchini volleyed home against his old club for a 2-1 victory on aggregate."

"I was going to substitute Giovanni, because he couldn't take it any longer," admitted Guidolin afterwards.

"He'd asked to be taken off because of cramp and I was going to replace him with Maurizio Rossi, so as to have a fresh pair of legs for extra time."

"Sometimes, at the end of matches like this one, a bit of luck doesn't do any harm."

Guidolin dedicated the victory to former Vicenza president Pieraldo Dalle Carbonare, currently under house arrest on fraud and bankruptcy charges over a family-owned textile business.

Bologna coach Renzo Ulivieri, who side played the last 25 minutes with 10 men after Giuseppe Cardone was sent off, said: "It's a shame, and very frustrating to have gone out."

"Over the 180 minutes, we've a lot to be regretful for."

Vicenza, who knocked out champions AC Milan in the quarter-finals, now face the winner of Wednesday night's other semi-final between Napoli and Inter Milan, which finished as a 1-1 draw at San Siro.

The final will be played over two legs in early June.

No evidence goalkeeper Segers threw games — lawyer

WINCHESTER, England, (R) — Defence counsel for former Wimbledon goalkeeper Hans Segers said on Tuesday accusations that the soccer star had thrown matches in return for money were rubbish.

"The prosecution cannot point to any match or any game which they say Segers threw. There is not one shred of positive evidence that Segers threw a match," Desmond Da Silva told a court in the south-western city of Winchester.

Segers and former Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar are accused of taking money from ex-Wimbledon striker John Fashanu and Malaysian businessman Heng Suan Lim to throw games for an Asian betting syndicate.

Lim admits he paid the two goalkeepers to forecast the results of matches but all four deny rigging games. The jury is expected to start considering its verdict next Monday.

Da Silva accused the prosecution of misleading the jury by focussing on 19 games Segers played in during the 1993/4 and 1994/5

seasons, most of which Wimbledon lost.

"What the schedule did not show was that some 24 matches in which he played were left out. Not one of them was lost. 19 were won and five were drawn," he said.

The 1993/4 season was the most successful in Wimbledon's history and the club finished sixth in the Premier Division.

"It doesn't take a genius to work out that Wimbledon did so brilliantly because Segers was doing his part in saving goals, not throwing them, and by winning matches, not losing them," said Da Silva.

"Before the case began, the prosecution sent a tape of some of the matches to an expert. The prosecution didn't say the results of the analysis showed nothing was wrong. It is rubbish to suggest Segers threw any games at all."

The prosecution focussed on 104,000 pounds (\$160,000) which Segers paid into a Swiss bank account over 13 months, suggesting the money was a reward for throwing games.

Da Silva told the court that part of the money had come from Lim for forecasting Dutch soccer matches and part was the proceeds of a tie-making company Segers had set up.

Segers, worried about being banned from soccer because of his involvement in match-fixing, lied to police about the money and said it had come from the proceeds of car thefts carried out when a teenager.

"If you forgive me for saying so, you can see how extremely stupid he was... The truth is, it was a stupid story stupidly told that fooled no one," Da Silva said.

The prosecution also concentrated on phone calls between the defendants and also calls made to Indonesia in the run-up to matches Segers and Grobbelaar are said to have rigged.

Da Silva said the calls had been presented in a misleading way because, on closer examination, the pattern of Segers' calls to the others was the same when Wimbledon won, lost or drew.

Doctor Zoff to save Lazio

ROME, (AFP) — Lazio's interim coach Dino Zoff believes his team can still be cured of its sickly run of form, despite suffering their eighth defeat of the season last weekend.

Lazio's woeful 2-0 defeat to Parma left them 12th in the Serie A table and with scant chance of winning a UEFA Cup slot next season.

But Zoff, the club president who is standing in as coach since last month's sacking of Zdenek Zeman, insisted: "We'll come through all this."

"When it comes down to it, there's nothing in football that isn't curable."

Zoff, one of Italy's World Cup winning heroes in 1982, has also been handicapped by injuries to first team regulars.

"Lazio's situation was already critical a month ago," he said.

"But on top of that, there are now physical problems for Pierluigi Casiraghi, Gioregio Venturin and Paul Okon."

Zoff said he will not tinker with the team's 4-4-2 formation, which relies heavily on using the off-side trap, but made it clear he did not have much time for Zeman's approach to the game.

"I've not changed anything from my predecessor, we'll continue to use the off-side whenever it's necessary," he said.

But he added: "For the past three years, Lazio have been playing a particular kind of football, I'd say almost obsessively, and in the current situation

there's no way we can change things just like that."

"There are 13 matches to go to the end of the championship and we've just got to work hard, that's all we can do."

Zoff, widely expected to make way for Sampdoria's Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson next season, also called for the backing of the Lazio fans.

"In times like these, we need their support even more than usual," he said.

Lazio's next challenge is at the Olympic stadium on Saturday against Fiorentina, who like Inter Milan and Juventus are playing a day earlier than usual because of European Cup commitments the following week.

MILAN, Italy, (R) — Boris Becker, keeping his distance from the media, was told on Tuesday to rest his injured wrist for three weeks after pulling out of his third tennis tournament in as many weeks.

Milan indoor tournament organisers said in a statement that doctor Fabrizio Fati had seen the former World Number One and three times Wimbledon champion in the city.

"Boris Becker came to Milan to be inspected by the tournament doctor, according to ATP rules," the statement said. "Doctor Fati, a specialist in orthopaedics, found a tendinitis of the right wrist and advised three weeks of rest."

The German pulled out of the \$815,000 Milan tournament on Sunday, after Friday's deadline for withdrawals, and was obliged to attend the medical in Milan under ATP rules which would otherwise have left him open to a hefty fine.

Officials said on Monday that Becker informed the tournament that he had decided to withdraw because

of a persistent problem with his right wrist.

The German has said he has been told by doctors that the problem originated from a pinched nerve in his neck.

Becker, 29 and currently ranked 12th in the world, last week pulled out of the European Community Championship in Antwerp, Belgium, because of tendinitis. The week before that the wrist injury forced him out of the Dubai Open.

The absence of Becker, who did not want to speak with journalists on Tuesday, added to a wave of withdrawals by injured leading players at the tournament.

Apart from Becker, seven-pulled out before the tournament started on Monday — Swedes Thomas Enqvist and Magnus Gustafsson, Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, Italian Renzo Furlan, Dutchman Jan Siemerink, German Hendrik Dreckmann and Czech Martin Damm.

An ATP spokesman said Damm had an ankle problem while Enqvist and Siemerink had leg injuries. Gustafsson a shoulder problem.



Boris Becker

Kafelnikov a hand injury and Dreckmann a wrist problem. Furlan was ill. Wimbledon champion

Richard Krajicek also left on Monday, beaten by Spanish wild card Sergi Bruguera 4-6 7-6-6.

Hodgson named Blackburn manager

LONDON, (AFP) — Inter Milan coach Roy Hodgson will take over as manager of English Premier Division Club Blackburn Rovers next season.

The club said Wednesday that Hodgson would be appointed on a three-year contract when his contract with the Italian side expires in July.

Tony Parkes will continue as caretaker manager probably until the end of the season.

Hodgson, 50 later this year, was named just five days after Sweden's Sven Goran Eriksson opted out of a move to Blackburn by choosing to stay in Italian football.

Fifth seed Stich goes out again in Milan

MILAN, (R) — Michael Stich continued his miserable start to the year on Tuesday when he lost to fellow German David Prinosil and became the second seed knocked out of the \$815,000 Milan Indoor Tennis Tournament.

The fifth seed, a former world number two whose ranking of 32 is the lowest he has plunged to since February 1991, lost his opening match 5-7 6-4 6-2 to the 59th-ranked player.

It was the fourth time this year that the former Wimbledon champion has gone out in the first round. Stich has progressed beyond it just once, reaching the second round at the Australian Open.

"My back is still hurting but what I really lack is self-confidence," said Stich, who followed 1996 Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek out of the tournament.

Second seed Krajicek was defeated by Spaniard Sergi Bruguera, a wild-

card entry, on Monday night.

Stich said: "I served well up to halfway through the second set. I controlled the match but then I lost four out of five service points at the end. It's unacceptable."

He said he was working hard and felt he was getting back to form but needed time. His next tournaments are in Rotterdam and St Petersburg.

Top seed and defending champion Goran Ivanisevic earlier made a winning, if not entirely convincing, start when he beat Russian qualifier Andrei Olhovskiy 7-6 6-7 6-2.

The Croat, who last week withdrew from the European Community Championship with tendinitis in his left shoulder, served 22 aces in the match.

The world number five faces Frenchman Cedric Pioline in the second round on Wednesday.

Italian Marzio Martelli, a "lucky loser" from the qualifying tournament and ranked 159 in the world, defeated Marc Goellner and next faces another German, 19-year-old Nicolas Kiefer.

"A year ago I was ranked 719 in the world. I cannot say where I will get to. I want to play day by day," said Martelli, who quit tennis for a year when he was 15 because he wanted to race in motocross instead.

The Milan tournament has been left without many top players because of injuries and illness. Four seeds have pulled out — Swedes Thomas Enqvist and Magnus Gustafsson, Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov and German Boris Becker.

Becker, who has tendinitis of the right wrist, appeared in Milan on Tuesday for a medical at the tournament. He was advised that he needed to take three weeks' rest.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Dolph Lundgren, Gina Bellman & Conrad Dunn.... in

SILENT TRIGGER

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Brad Pitt, Julia Ormond, Anthony Hopkins & Aidan Quinn...in LEGENDS OF THE FALL

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238

PLAZA

Adel Imam, Shireen & Saeed Saleh Bakhit Wa Adilah (2) Al Jardal Walkankah

Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1" CURT RUSSEL & STEVEN SEGAL...IN EXECUTIVE DECISION Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD "2" Michael Jordan ...in SPACEJAM

Shows: 3:30, 6:00

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دولف لندجرين

Hingis set to become youngest No. 1

YAMFORD, Connecticut, (I) — Swiss teen sensation Martina Hingis, unbeaten so far in 1997, is poised to become the youngest tennis player ever to be ranked number one in the world. Unless injured women's number one Steffi Graf is able to defend her title at the Lipton Championships next month, Hingis will officially take over the top ranking on March 31, a WTA Tour spokeswoman confirmed on Tuesday.

Graf is expected to be sidelined for four weeks while nursing a knee injury, which means she will be unable to defend the rankings points she picked up in winning titles at Indian Wells and Lipton last year.

With Graf out of those tournaments, Hingis will edge past the German in the rankings at the conclusion of the Lipton event, the WTA Tour said.

Hingis, dubbed the "can't miss Swiss" during a meteoric rise to prominence on

the women's tour, will be aged 16 years, six months and one day on March 31, easily eclipsing Monica Seles, who first became number one at the age of 17 years, three months and 19 days.

John McEnroe holds the record for youngest number one on the men's tour at 21 years, 15 days.

Hingis earned what will likely be the first of many grand slam singles titles last month when she won the Australian Open, becoming the youngest singles winner of a major championship since Lottie Dod won Wimbledon at 15 in 1887.

The Swiss prodigy has already scooped up four singles titles this year while running her match record to 18-0.

The second-ranked Hingis is scheduled to play next week at Indian Wells before moving on to the March 17-29 Lipton Championships.

But her performance at Lipton will have no bearing

on her ability to overtake Graf, since Hingis lost her opening match at Key Biscayne last year and has just one rankings point to defend, the WTA spokeswoman said.

Hingis's ascension would end a streak of 94 consecutive weeks at the top for Graf. Since first grabbing the top spot from Martina Navratilova in August of 1987, the German superstar has held the number one ranking for a record total of 373 weeks.

Hingis, touted as a future number one since her junior days, turned professional October 14, 1994, but really came into her own last year.

She won her first singles title in Filderstadt last October and added another title in Oakland. Hingis also reached three other finals in 1996, including at prestigious year-end championships in New York, where she lost to Graf.

Since then, Hingis has been unbeatable.

Graf says Hingis is breath of fresh air

BONN, (R) — World Number One Steffi Graf described 16-year-old Martina Hingis as a breath of fresh air and said she was not upset by the prospect of losing her top ranking to her.

"I didn't think Martina would become so good," Graf told the German monthly magazine Sports Live in an interview released on Tuesday. "Martina exudes a freshness that can only be good for the tour."

Graf faces a four-week lay-off with a knee injury and will be unable to defend two titles in the United States.

This means Swiss Hingis, whose win at last month's Australian Open made her the youngest singles champion since 15-year-old Lottie Dod won Wimbledon in 1887,

will almost certainly take over the number one ranking which Graf has held for a record 373 weeks in succession.

But Graf, holder of 21 grand slam titles, insisted she was not worried.

"My sporting satisfaction has nothing to do with world rankings," she said. "I'm more than happy if the interest moves away from me for a bit, especially after the strains of the last few months (when Graf's father was on trial for tax evasion)."

Graf, however, said she was disappointed by the failure of other players to challenge herself and Hingis more strongly.

"There are some who could get a great deal more out of themselves," she said. "Monica (Seles) could if she

wanted to. But I don't think she really wants to any more."

In the interview, Graf again affirmed her innocence in the tax evasion affair for which her father, who managed her multi-million dollar income, has been sentenced to three years and nine months in jail.

Prosecutors have said they may still press charges against Graf herself, whose signature was on the tax returns.

"When I heard that I was also supposed to be guilty in the tax affair, it really upset and affected me," she said. "I knew what I had done and that I was free of any guilt, only I was unable to explain it to anyone and I would have liked to tell every single person: 'I'm innocent.'"

Rockets beat Lakers but lose Brent Price

HOUSTON, (R) — Hakeem Olajuwon had 25 points and 13 rebounds as the Houston Rockets held off the Los Angeles Lakers 100-96, but lost point guard Brent Price to injury again.

Charles Barkley added 26 points and 17 rebounds for the Rockets, who got their fourth win in five games. Houston avenged a double-overtime home loss to Los Angeles earlier this season and has won five of the last seven meetings.

Price tore an anterior cruciate ligament for the second time in his career and is out for the season. Price, who tore his left ACL in 1994 while with the Washington Bullets, tore his right ACL midway through the second quarter.

"Obviously, it's disappointing," said Price, who missed the first 27 games this season with an elbow injury and will undergo surgery in the next week. "This year just wasn't meant to be for me."

"A very big win for us was overshadowed by Brent's injury," said Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich. "I've never seen a guy have such a streak of bad luck in one year."

Elden Campbell, coming off a career-high 40 points against New York on Sunday, had 19 and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who have lost four of their last five games and fell to 2-4 since centre Shaquille O'Neal suffered a knee injury.

Los Angeles nearly erased a 20-point deficit. After a hook by Olajuwon gave the Rockets an 86-69 lead with 9:21 to go, Campbell and Byron Scott scored four points apiece in a 17-4 run that cut it to 90-86 with 3:15 to go. But Olajuwon scored Houston's next six points to stave off the threat.

In Utah, Karl Malone scored 10 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter and John Stockton's two free throws with 3:10 to play snapped a tie as the Jazz won for the eighth time in nine games, 110-99 over the New York Knicks.

Jeff Hornacek added 21 points for Utah, which

closed the game with a 16-5 burst. The Jazz have won their last five home games over New York and split the two-game season series.

Patrick Ewing scored 28 points and John Starks 21 for New York, which fell to 2-2 on its six-game road trip. The Knicks rallied from an 18-point third-quarter deficit and held a lead late in the fourth quarter.

In Dallas, rookie Erick Strickland, signed for the rest of the season earlier in the day, scored a season-high 17 points including the game-winning free throws with 3.9 seconds left as the Mavericks edged the Charlotte Hornets, 86-84.

Strickland, a point guard from Nebraska who was waived earlier this season and signed a 10-day contract on February 15, was forced to start due to Derek Harper's stomach virus. Harper scored nine points in 23 minutes off the bench.

Michael Finley scored 18 points and Shawn Bradley added 16 and 11 rebounds for the Mavericks.

Glen Rice scored 29 points for Charlotte, which saw its season-high five game winning streak snapped.

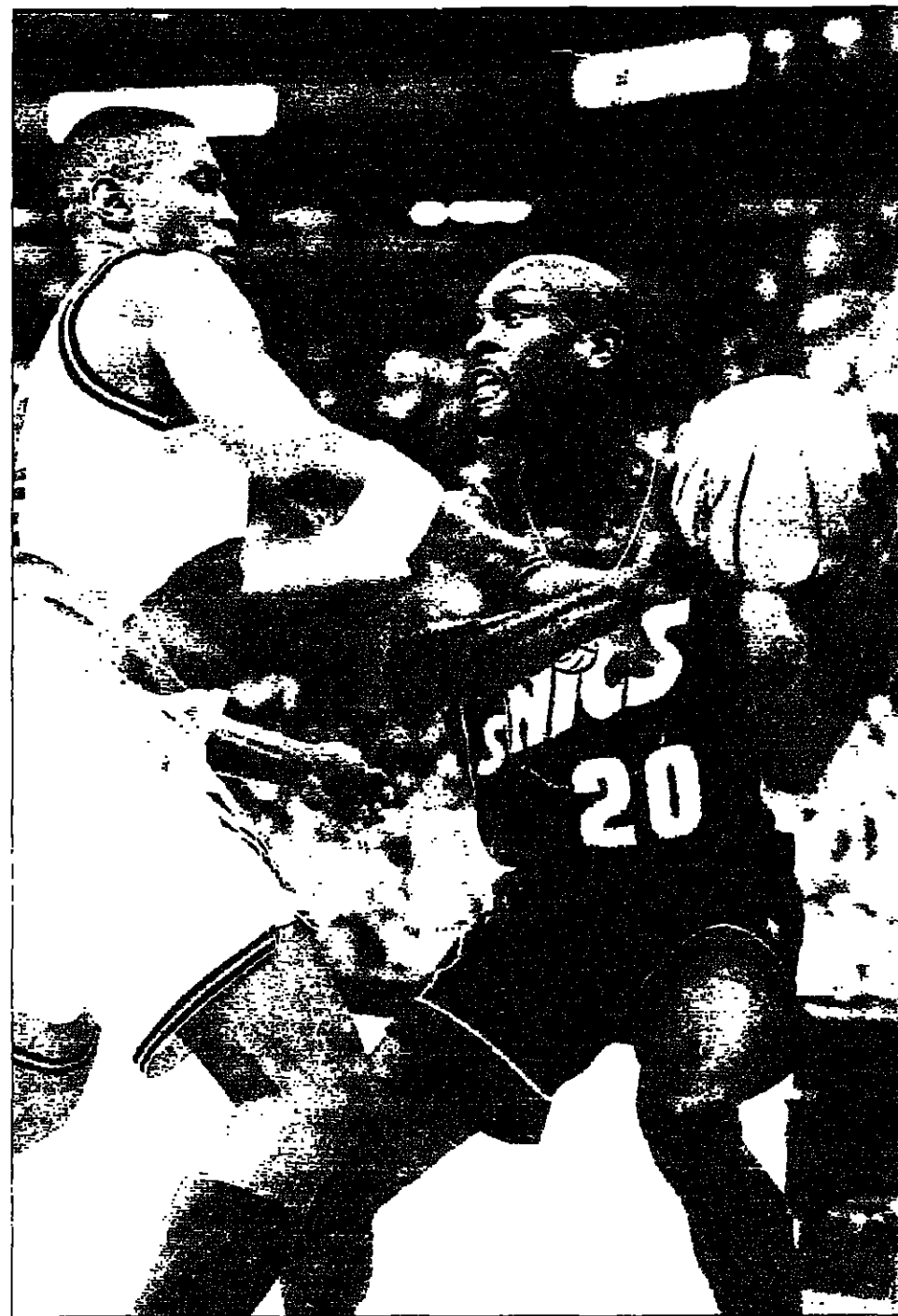
In New Jersey, Sam Cassell hit a crucial three-pointer with 29 seconds left and the Nets held the Sacramento Kings scoreless for the final 4:46 in a 97-90 victory.

Kendall Gill scored 28 points and Cassell 23. The Nets have won two straight for just the second time this season.

Mitch Richmond scored 32 points, but only four in the fourth quarter, as the Kings dropped their second in a row.

At Cleveland, Sam Perkins scored 14 points off the bench, including a clutch three-pointer with 1:46 to play, as the Seattle SuperSonics won their seventh straight game, 72-66 over the Cavaliers.

Hersey Hawkins scored 16 points for the SuperSonics, who won despite single-digit efforts from All-Stars Gary Payton and Shawn Kemp.



Bobby Phillips (L), of the Cleveland Cavaliers, takes a swipe at the ball as he defends Gary Payton of the Seattle SuperSonics, during the first quarter at Gund Arena. Seattle beat Cleveland 72-66.

Payton, averaging 22.4 points per game, was held to eight points. Kemp, averaging 20.4 points, was held to nine — his third straight game in single digits.

In Denver, Damon Stoudamire scored nine of his career-high 35 points in overtime as the Toronto Raptors beat the Nuggets 124-122.

Stoudamire, averaging 19 points over his last four games, scored 15 in the fourth quarter alone.

including 11 straight Toronto points in a 2-46 span. He scored the last six points of overtime, all on foul shots.

The Raptors got just their sixth road win in 27 tries.

Laphonso Ellis scored 32 points, including eight of his career-high 35 points in overtime, as Denver lost its fifth straight. The Nuggets had been 3-0 all-time against Toronto.

At Washington, Juwan Howard had 28 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists

as the Bullets beat the Indiana Pacers 108-87.

Howard was one assist shy of his first career triple-double, shooting 12-of-19 from the field.

Washington snapped a three-game losing streak.

In Los Angeles, Loy Vaught scored all 20 of his points in the first three quarters as the Clippers built a 15-point lead entering the final period and withstood a late rally for a 98-93 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Padres pioneer Pacific baseball

PEORIA, Arizona, (AFP) — Major-league baseball goes to Hawaii in April when the San Diego Padres play the St. Louis Cardinals in three games in Honolulu.

The teams, who will be meeting for the first time since last year's National League Division series, will play a doubleheader on April 19 followed by a single game on April 20.

Last season San Diego played the first regular-season

major-league games in Mexico when it played the New York Mets in three games in August.

The Padres might make more history next season as they are reported to be thinking of opening the 1998 campaign in Japan.

"We are proud major league baseball is coming to Hawaii for the first time. We trust the experience will be rewarding for the Padres, Cardinals and the fans in

Hawaii," said Padres president and chief executive officer Larry Lucchino.

The Padres won the national league West title last season and lost in the division series to the NL central-winning Cardinals.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AA3 OAKQ654 OAJ53 AQ

The bidding has proceeded:

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

Pass Pass 4A ?

What do you bid now?

Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

A2 OJ5 OAJ654 AKQ72

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 10 1A 3H

4A Pass 4A Pass

What action do you take?

Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAQJ4 CAQ9 O6648 A65

Partner opens the bidding with two no trump. What do you bid now?

Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AK9 QK32 OAK1084 AKJ7

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with a weak two

spades. What action do you take?

Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKQ732 QJ553 O6 AKQ10

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1A Pass 30 Pass

What do you bid now?

Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AKJ84 QKJ65 Ovoid AK865

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 10 Pass

What action do you take?

Look for answers on Monday.

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Qualified candidates are invited to send their CVs detailing experience, certificates, along with reference and contact address to:

P.O. Box 962031, Amman - 11196, Jordan



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- 2) Slurry / watergel explosives (700) MT.
- 3) Emulsion or slurry / watergel explosives (500) MT.

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time Saturday, 15th March, 1997. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD 150 for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Tuesday, 25th March, 1997.

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Managing Director

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AOHR's 1996 report renews rights charges against government

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) on Wednesday accused the government again of registering the worst record of human rights since the democratisation process began in 1989.

In a press conference held at the organisation's headquarters, the AOHR secretary general and other board members presented the group's 1996 annual report.

According to the report prepared by the Jordan chapter of the Cairo-based organisation, the beginning of 1996 "witnessed the formation of a new government that promised to respect human rights. Instead there has been a deterioration in the state of human rights in the Kingdom bringing back the situation reminiscent of the days of martial law."

The group levelled similar charges against the government late last year, and senior government officials rejected the allegations. No government official was available for immediate comment on the renewed charges.

AOHR Secretary General Hani Dahle read the annual report and asserted that the alleged violations had been made mainly in the areas of freedom of expression, misuse or abuse of legislation and arbitrary arrests as well as the physical and mental torture of detainees.

The AOHR report divided the alleged violations into 10 sections: constitutional and legal, the right to life, the right to justice, supremacy of law and personal security, the treatment of prisoners and detainees, the right to form societies, the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of speech and expression, the right to free movement and residency, the right to participate in public affairs and the right to work.

The report provided a list of alleged violations under each section as well as examples of affected persons. The report accused the government of "having failed to establish a constitutional court that penalises constitutional violations thereby creating a loophole for itself in the judicial system."

The report denounced the extension of powers of the State Security Court by Parliament, on the grounds that the court "is undemocratic and a remnant of the country's mar-

tial law past." The report rejected the one-person, one-vote law stating that "it provides the government the means to manipulate the electoral system and hence fails to fulfill the rights of citizens."

Another violation of which the authorities were accused was the misuse or incorrect application of legislation "with the aim of violating the right of some citizens or intimidating them."

The report said that "the law most abused by the authorities is the penal code, specifically Article 195."

"This article was originally created to prevent slander of His Majesty the King, but is used to detain citizens under false charges of slander."

AOHR board member Fakhri Balbisi told reporters that seven people were still detained under Article 195.

According to the report, "the country has seen a sharp decline in the tolerance of the government towards the opposition, as is evident in the number of arbitrary arrests made."

"The bread riots led the government to take military measures...using massive force against civilians...security and military forces detained and questioned a large number of civilians without directing any charges against most of them or failed to prove the charges directed at others," the report stated.

The report also said that the Kingdom had seen a relative relaxation of restrictive policies regulating freedom of expression. However, the report added, the relaxation was not accompanied by a change in legislation limiting these freedoms.

"This was reflected in the restrictions imposed on daily newspapers to practice self-censorship and an increase of infiltration of public security presence in those dailies," Mr. Dahle told reporters.

"The government has also used the Press and Publications Law to control weeklies and opposition papers," said the report.

"The result has been the arrest and detention of many editors and journalists most of whom have been acquitted. Many journalists have also been prohibited from writing. As a result the number of cases in court against the press has risen sharply and needs to be dealt with immediately."

According to the AOHR, 20 to 25 journalists were referred to court during last year.

Israelis shell S. Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Lebanese police said an Israeli shell that exploded outside a home in Israeli-occupied South Lebanon Wednesday burst the eardrums of a 45-year-old woman.

Another four shells struck the same village, Barasheet, with one hitting the wall around a school, but the 250 pupils had been evacuated, police said.

About 20 more shells, also fired from the west of the zone fell on the hills surrounding Barasheet, a town of 2,500 Christians and Muslims.

Yvonne Yacoub, who suffered burst eardrums and a nervous reaction, was taken to the government hospital at Tebrin, to the east. Her sister Nihal, 20, and cousin Marwan, 17, were also being treated at the hospital for hysteria, the police said.

Earlier, Israeli troops and allied militiamen killed a guerrilla as he tried to infiltrate an Israeli-occupied enclave in Southern Lebanon, the militia said Wednesday.

Three guerrillas tried to enter Beit Yahoun to plant roadside bombs early Wednesday, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia said.

Israeli and militiamen fired tank and artillery shells at the guerrillas, killing at least one, said militia officials, who spoke on customary condition of anonymity.

The two other guerrillas may have been killed when the bombs they were trying to plant detonated, they said.

Hizbollah refused to comment on the clash. Lebanese security officials, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said they knew of only one guerrilla wounded.

Hizbollah guerrillas raked the militia outpost in Beit Yahoun with rocket and machine-gun fire, but no casualties were reported.

On Feb. 18, a 33-year-old woman was killed and two other civilians were wounded during Israeli shelling at Habush, north of the zone.

Two days later, a 23-year-old shepherd was killed while handling an Israeli bomb camouflaged as a rock at a crossroads.

The international committee monitoring the April 26 ceasefire in South Lebanon between Israel and Hizbollah condemned the Israeli shelling at Habush.

Israel given 3 months to find asylum for 6 Iraqis

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's supreme court refused Wednesday to release six Iraqi defectors held in Israeli jails and gave the state three months to find the prisoners asylum, Israel Radio said.

The court said that the release of the defectors would be a security risk, the radio said.

The Iraqis sneaked into Israel from Jordan alone or in couples since the Gulf war.

They are serving sentences for illegal entry and have been issued deportation orders.

However, no country has been found to grant them asylum.

Reports said another Iraqi was arrested this week after entering Israel through Jordan.



'ONE MINUTE'S DARKNESS FOR ILLUMINATION': Turkish children hold lighted candles in Ankara Tuesday night to join the demonstrations dubbed "One minute's darkness for illumination" throughout the country. Many Turks switch off lights, sound horns or take to the streets with lighted candles each night at nine, chanting anti-government slogans to protest against a security scandal (Reuters photo)

3 leftist parties announce merger; 8 centrist groups continue efforts

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Three leftist political parties on Wednesday announced their merger as Jordanian Nationalist Democratic Front, as the leaders of eight centrist groups held a meeting aimed at achieving a similar objective.

The Jordanian Arab Baath Socialist Party led by Khalil Haddadin, the pan-Arab National Action Party (Haq) headed by Mohammad Zobi and the newly-established Arab Land Party headed by Mohammed Ouran announced the merger in a press release.

Simultaneously, the leaders of eight centrist nationalist parties were meeting at the headquarters of Al Watan party, headed by Hakam Kheir, late into the night.

Party sources confirmed that the meeting was held, but would not disclose its contents and the number of participants.

Anis Muasher of Al Waed (Promise), Minister of Housing and Public Works Abdul Hadi Majali of Al Ahd (Pledge), former Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh of Al Yakatha (Reawakening), Mijhem Khreisha of the Jordanian National Alliance and Ali Sa'ad of Progress and Justice have

been negotiating over the past several weeks for the finalisation of a common political programme.

With less than nine months before the next general elections, many of Jordan's 26 officially registered political parties are trying to work out a common platform to field candidates in unified lists, increasing their chances of gaining votes and parliamentary seats.

The merger of three leftist parties announced Wednesday is expected to strengthen the leftists' performance in the coming elections, observers and analysts say.

The Jordanian Nationalist Democratic Front's political platform presents a very strong pan-Arab and socialist character.

Combining democracy and Arab unity as the key points of its political programme, the front aims at achieving "the full unification of Arab energies and capabilities to attain democracy as a safe tool to improve the Arab Nation's political, social and economic conditions," the press release by the front said.

Strongly accusing the U.S. international policy of "depriving the Arab Nation of its economic independence, destroying it from within and exploiting all Arab resources," the front

also called for the termination of Jordan's "short-term economic plans, which are dictated from the outside and are threatening the national economy."

"Jordan lacks a proper strategic plan independent from the Western bloc, and cannot therefore face its regional enemy," the statement said.

At the international level, the statement said the front seeks the termination of Arab-Israeli peace treaties "degrading for the Arab Nation and signalling a capitulation to the Zionist enemy."

On the domestic scene, the front's political programme puts great emphasis on public freedoms, mainly freedom of association and expression, as pillars of democracy.

"The Democratic Front will fight to ensure the creation of a nation free to establish political and cultural associations to express the people's aspirations," the press release stated.

The front strongly rejected the current one-person, one-vote system and called for "the introduction of a more democratic election law." However, the statement would not specify neither the amendments to the current electoral law the front proposes nor the kind of new system it envisages.

Jordan did not extradite any of its citizens to U.S. — ministers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government on Wednesday denied that it has extradited any Jordanian citizen to the U.S. or any other country and stressed that decisions by the judicial authorities are duly respected.

The government's views were expressed by Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Hisham Tal and Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Dughmi during a regular Parliament session and in reply to queries by Deputy Hamzeh Mansour.

"The government respects and abides by Jordanian court decisions and the question of extraditing Jordanians is still examined by the judicial authorities," said Mr. Tal, who categorically denied that the government has ever extradited any Jordanian citizen.

Deputy Mansour had commended the Court of Cassation for its verdict against extraditing Bassam Qassem, a naturalised American citizen of Jordanian origin, in connection with an arson attack in Chicago in 1990.

Mr. Mansour said that any extradition of Jordanian citizens to the U.S. was unconstitutional because Parliament has not endorsed an extradition treaty between the two countries.

"I would like to ask who is responsible for extraditing Jordanian citizens, to other countries and who is responsible for violating the Jordanian Constitution and laws?" said Mr. Mansour.

He demanded that the House put an end to any violations and to hold officials to account for committing them.

The Court of Cassation said in its ruling that the extradition treaty was not valid because it was not approved by Parliament.

Jordan and the U.S. signed an extradition treaty in 1995, but Parliament has to ratify the document before it could take effect.

The justice minister echoed Mr. Tal's views in the House and assured Mr. Mansour that Jordan has never handed over any Jordanian citizen to an Arab or foreign country.

He said as to the case of Iyad Nijem, a Jordanian wanted in the United States, had willingly surrendered himself but was not extradited by the Jordanian authorities.

Deputy Mansour referred to a visit to Jordan recently by the head of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and said that he wanted to receive a government's clarification about the nature of the visit and also the government's views concerning media reports that Jordan and Israel were studying the prospect of concluding a defence pact.

In reply Dr. Ensour said the report was totally groundless.

"The government cannot contemplate such treaty as long as the Palestinian problem and the refugees issues remain outstanding and as long as no durable peace has been established," said Dr. Ensour.

Information Minister Marwan Muasher told the press on Monday that Jordan and Israel were cooperating in security matters under a specific agreement already signed as called for in the October 1994 peace treaty between the two countries.

Beyond that Jordan was not contemplating any defence agreement as reported, the information minister also said.



U.S. congressmen criticise 'Schindler's List' airing

WASHINGTON (R) — A republican member of congress criticised NBC television for showing the Holocaust movie "Schindler's List," saying its airing during family time should outrage parents. Representative Tom Coburn of Oklahoma was quoted in a release put out by his Oklahoma office as saying the airing on Sunday of the highly acclaimed film took network television "to an all-time low, with full frontal nudity, violence and profanity being shown in our homes."

His criticism brought a response from Senator Alfonse D'Amaio, a New York Republican, who told the senate Coburn's statement was "shocking."

"To equate the nudity of the Holocaust victims in the concentration camp with any sexual connotations is outrageous and offensive."

Car too small to carry suspected burglars' loot

SIoux FALLS, South Dakota (R) — Two suspected burglars were nabbed when police spotted a safe sticking out of the back of their loaded getaway car, authorities said. Richard and Raymond Lingle of Sioux Falls were stopped by police Saturday night and were later charged in connection with the burglary of a local business earlier that evening. The haul included the safe, darts, pool cues and other games equipment.

Woman gets dead lover's frozen sperm

LOS ANGELES (R) — A woman has been given custody of 12 vials of frozen sperm left to her in a will by her lover who committed suicide more than five years ago, a newspaper reported. Deborah Hecht was willed the sperm by Bill Kane, a Los Angeles businessman, so that she could bear his children after his death, the Los Angeles Times reported. The 12 vials of sperm, which had been stored in a cryogenics bank since Kane deposited them there in 1991, were the subject of a bitter custody battle between Hecht and Kane's grown children.

Smelly trash might have forced airport to close

WASHINGTON (R) — Rotten fruit might have led to the temporary closure of Washington's national airport, not a gas leak as first suspected, officials said. Officials ordered the main terminal and control tower evacuated on Sunday night after foul odours wafted through the terminal, causing air traffic controllers and ticket agents to suspect a gas leak. Airlines had to cancel 26 flights and divert 24 others to nearby airports. But in all-night testing, baffled Washington Gas Co. technicians could find no leaks in the gas pipes. Airport officials said they have now focused on a trash bin loaded with rotting fruit and leftover food as the possible culprit.

Cask of tequila is key clue in drug scandal

MEXICO CITY (R) — The case against Mexico's fallen drug czar and his alleged trafficker associate hinges in part on a barrel of tequila. Mexican authorities say, Mexico's attorney general's office (PGR) disclosed key evidence on Monday in its case against Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo, the country's top anti-drug official until he was arrested last week on charges of working for Arnado Carrillo Fuentes, head of the powerful Juarez drug cartel.

Saddam vows to overcome Iraq's misfortune, resist U.S.

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein vowed to fight the United States which he denounced as the "most abominable dictatorship known to humanity," the official press said Wednesday.

"Iraqis are determined to overcome this misfortune (embargo) and resist the forces of evil headed by America, the most abominable dictatorship known to humanity," President Saddam was quoted as telling delegates from an international court.

He met Tuesday with former Algerian President Ahmad Ben Bella, who heads the delegation from the court set up in Madrid in November 1991 to "try" officials for the consequences of the embargo imposed by the United Nations.

Saddam accused the United States of seeking to "impose its dictatorship on the whole world," and said "Iraqis have a duty to defend not only their national sovereignty but also great human principles."

Mr. Ben Bella said the court IC tasked with trying the U.N. Security

Council, the United States and the United Nations for "crimes committed against Iraq and humanity."

The court is made up of lawyers, political leaders, union figures and intellectuals from a dozen countries, who got together under the initiative of the leftist Spanish coalition Izquierda Unida (IU).

The body was formed by the Spanish association "Campaign for Lifting the sanctions on Iraq," which includes IU, the "Club of the Friends of UNESCO in Madrid" and the "Committee for Solidarity with the Arab Cause."

The court blamed the United Nations, especially its main member country the United States, for the death of 1.5 million people — including 750,000 children under five years old — under the U.N. sanctions.

Ekeus welcomes agreement

In Ankara, U.N. arms envoy Rolf Ekeus on Wednesday welcomed Iraq's consent for the United Nations to have wrecked compo-

nents of Baghdad's banned missiles analysed abroad.

"One of the difficult issues which had been plaguing U.S. in the last months... has been solved," Mr. Ekeus told reporters at a briefing in Ankara, where he was holding talks with Turkish officials.

Mr. Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM), announced at the weekend in Baghdad that Iraq had agreed to the removal of missile engine remnants from the country for technical analysis by the commission.

Mr. Ekeus has said U.N. experts started packing the engine parts to fly them to the United States through Bahrain.

The United Nations wants to establish if the parts are from missing Soviet-made engines as Iraq says, or are local equipment buried to divert attention from hidden missile engines.

The components were unearthed during excavations last year. Iraq destroyed the missiles without U.N. consent in 1992 and Mr. Ekeus said

unilateral scrapping of banned items by Iraq was complicating the work of his commission.

In Ankara he said "...half of the job (of the commission) is done," but added more work was needed on remaining weapons' issues.

Chemical and biological weapons would represent a serious security threat in the region if Iraq were allowed to retain them, he said.

His visit to Ankara had the dual purpose of addressing the military concerns brought up by Turkey's position as a neighbour of Iraq and Ankara's disquiet about the economic impact of the U.N. embargo, he said.

"I think there is a major concern in Turkey about the economic consequences on Turkey of the embargo," he said.

Turkish officials say the sanctions have cost Turkey \$27 billion in terms of lost trade.

The sanctions imposed after the Gulf war in 1991 require Baghdad to dispose of all weapons of mass destruction before the embargo on Iraqi oil exports can be completely

lifted.

The U.N. Security Council will hold a bi-monthly review of the sanctions against Iraq on March 3.

Sahhaf in New York

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahhaf has arrived in New York ahead of the U.N. Security Council meeting next week expected to renew Iraqi sanctions for a further two months.

U.N. officials said Wednesday that the minister would meet Mr. Rolf Ekeus, who returns to New York on Friday.

Mr. Sahhaf, who arrived in New York late Tuesday, was also due to meet U.N. humanitarian affairs chief Yasushi Akashi, whose department is supervising an oil-for-food deal aimed at alleviating the suffering of the sanctions-hit Iraqi people.

The Security Council is to discuss the sanctions issue on Monday at its regular two-monthly review.